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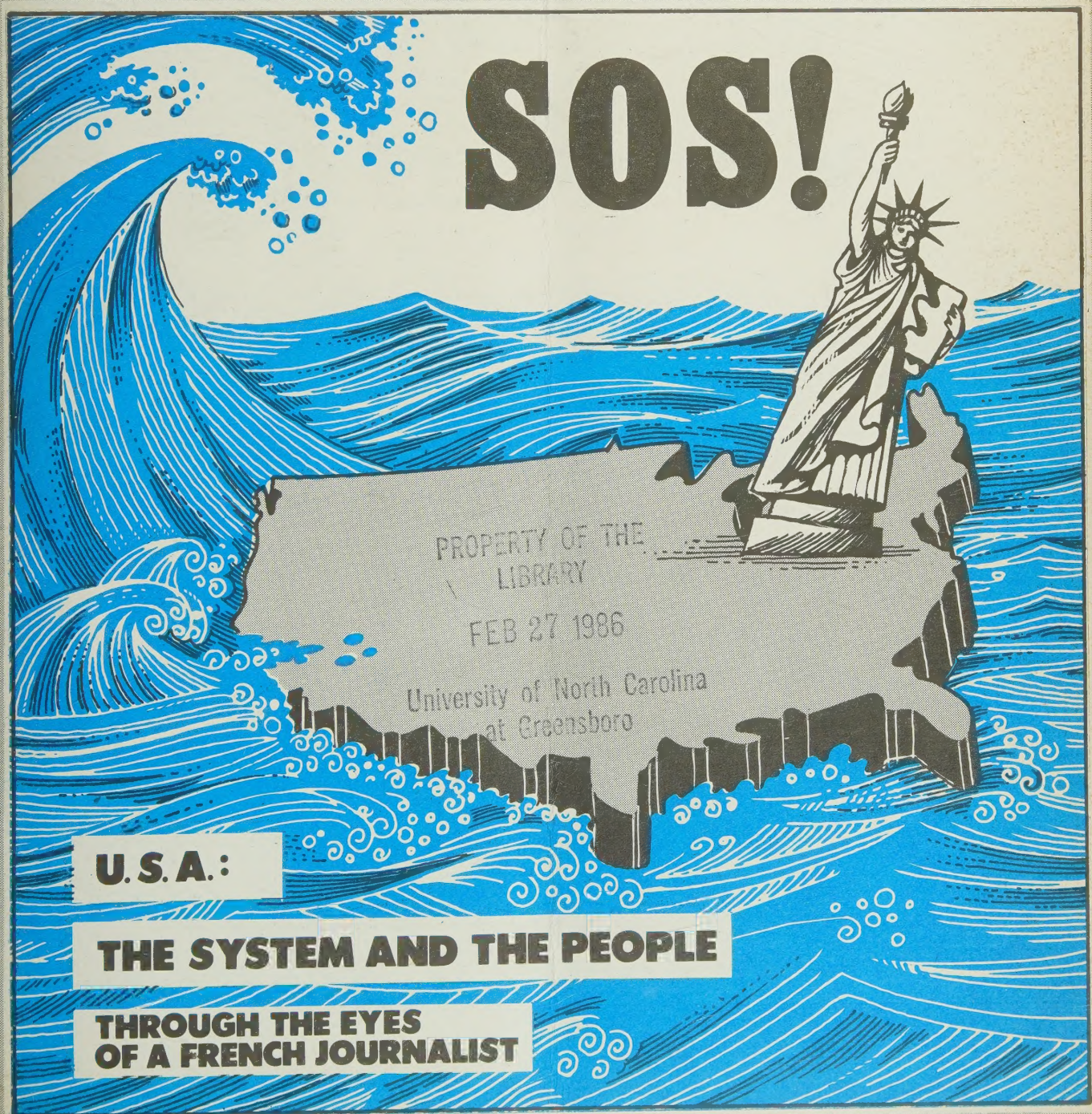
NEW TIMES

A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

SOCIALISM ON THE EVE OF THE 21st CENTURY

BONN ZIGZAGS

CHIEF ASSASSIN — CIA



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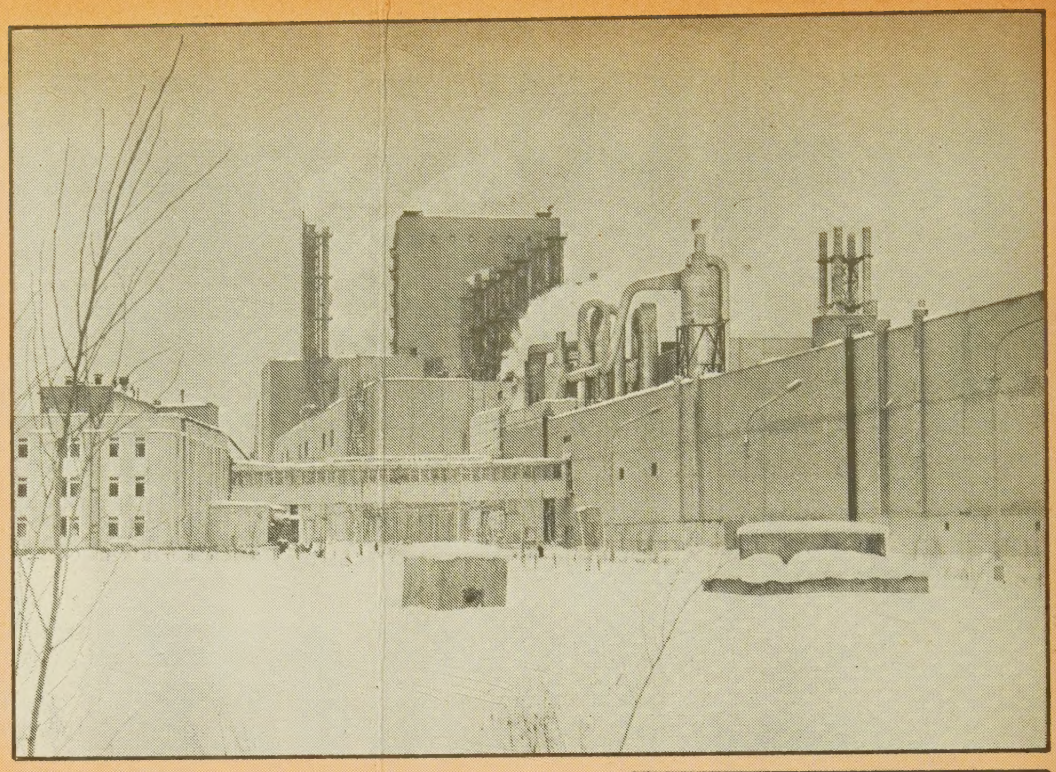
THE SYSTEM AND THE PEOPLE

THROUGH THE EYES OF A FRENCH JOURNALIST



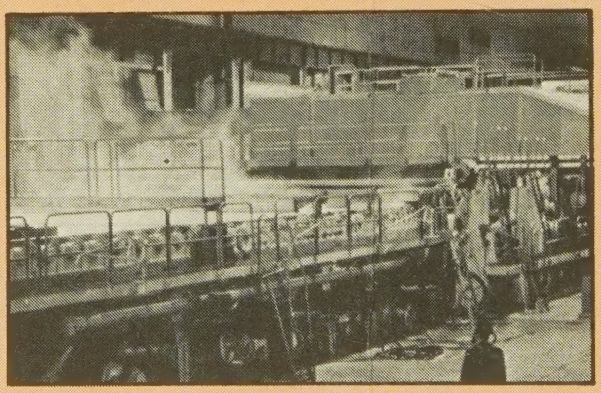
The snow-laden forest stretched to the horizon, the trees motionless in the —40° C frost. Primeval silence reigned supreme.

Nothing could have struck a more incongruous note than the tramcar that suddenly thrust itself out of the taiga. The orange-coloured car listed as it negotiated a bend and hurtled on towards a cluster of high-rise buildings between the edge of the forest and the bank of the Angara River. This was Ust-Ilimsk. Along the town's outskirts ran a high-tension power line originating at a hydroelectric station on the Angara and disappearing along with the tramline into the frosty haze.

A 14-kilometre tram ride brought us to a factory block rearing like a broad-decked cruiser in the midst of the forest. Along the deck crawled logs manipulated by mechanical arms that sorted them out and sent them on into the inner depths.

The Ust-Ilimsk plant is a cellulose mill, a product of the integration programme of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Built jointly by CMEA member countries, its output and profits are shared by them on an equal footing. The mill went into operation in 1979.

Few people are to be seen inside the plant. Everything is automated to the maximum. Since the production process is a chemical one, tests of the air are made regularly in Ust-Ilimsk and strict control of the discharge of waste from the mill is the rule. Analyses show that there is no detrimental effect on the environment. The water discharged into the Angara is biologically pure (the mill spends annually 7 per cent of its own cost on sewage treatment). So one need not fear to take a dip! Incidentally, school programmes in the town include compulsory swimming lessons—not in the frigid Angara, of course, but in municipal indoor swimming pools, which are to be found even in nursery schools. In general, children are given every attention, and no wonder, considering that the average age in the town is under thirty. And the first of the local people to retire on pension were looked upon as a curiosity.



Around the town is a 100-kilometre zone of primeval taiga. Timber-felling operations are conducted beyond this ecological belt, in an area to the northwest where the renowned Tungusska meteorite fell in 1908.

None of the townsfolk of course remember that occurrence. Scientists estimate that the energy released by it amounted to 10^{24} ergs. Now the power generation capacity of Siberia exceeds the elemental force of the bolide—a comparison that inspires pride in the creative powers of human reason. The people of Ust-Ilimsk are convinced that the constructive potential of the socialist system—a potential created by co-operation and mutual assistance among the fraternal peoples—is in every respect superior to the potential of destruction on which the forces of reaction pin their hopes.

This, indeed, is the motto of Ust-Ilimsk.

Picture story
by B. KOZLOV

ON THE SUBJECT OF BELIEVING

Can the Soviet Union believe that the present U.S. Administration and the governments of certain of its allies will agree to the new Soviet proposals? In his L'Humanité interview, published on February 8, Mikhail Gorbachev said he had been asked that question and that it was a not unnatural question. Indeed, can one believe it or not? And in general, can we believe our negotiating partners from across the world's socio-political divide? And can they believe us?

To say No is simpler. And that is the rule the capitalist world has been following for nearly 70 years. The Bolsheviks propose peace? Don't believe 'em! Chicherin holds out a programme of general disarmament? Don't believe him! The Soviet Union proclaims the idea of collective security? It calls for the scrapping of nuclear weapons and reduction of conventional arms? Don't believe it! By this practice of total, out-of-hand disbelief they were provoking us, as it were, to do the same. That would enable them to hide behind "Soviet intransigence" and make it easier to disguise the real roots of the policies of confrontation and imperialist aggression. But not for nothing did Lenin warn all the way back in 1917, at the historic Congress of Soviets in the Smolny, that an ultimatum on our part would make things easier for our enemies.

In citing those words of Lenin's in his interview to the French communist paper, the CPSU General Secretary called attention to a most essential aspect of Soviet foreign policy. For policy cannot be made on the basis of whether or not you believe the other side. Policy, especially in the nuclear age, has to be made in the light of realities—the alignment of forces on the international scene, the dictates of the times, the interests of your own people and of other peoples, last but most certainly not least, the interests of world peace.

The Soviet Union and the whole socialist community have cause enough to distrust many of the actions of Western diplomacy. But it would be fatal for the future of the world if we made that a reason for inaction, on the theory that "what will be will be, there is no changing the Western politicians, the leopard cannot change his spots." How could we take such an attitude when what threatens is the destruction of all mankind?

The Soviet programme for getting rid of nuclear arms by the year 2000 is solidly rooted in reality. Decisive action to curb the nuclear madness is an absolute dictate of the times. If anyone still needed proof of that, the Challenger tragedy supplied it: it showed how perilous is the course proposed by some American politicians, which makes humanity a hostage to machines and consequently to their malfunctioning. Arrived at the point where the arms race threatens to spill over into outer space, the world has no right to resign itself helplessly to that deadly prospect. And so in advancing its programme for abolishing nuclear arms the Soviet Union is acting in the interests both of its own people and of all other peoples of the globe.

There is also another very basic thing underlying our proposals. The world balance of forces is not something fixed and static, it evolves. The Soviet people, naturally, want it to evolve in favour of the cause of peace and progress, and they have a tried and tested means of helping to that end: to build up the political, economic, spiritual and defensive strength of their country. That is what they are thinking about as they conclude the present nationwide discussion in the run-up to the Party congress.

In his answers to L'Humanité questions, the Soviet leader gave a broad picture of the new phase our society has entered—a picture that is impressive but at the same time realistic, without any covering up of shortcomings and failings. "At our congress," he said, "we shall show in detail how we mean to unfold ever more fully in our country the possibilities of socialism, to realize its inherent potential." That internal potential is also a potential for world peace.

The vast machine of anti-Soviet propaganda, in which class hatred for actually existing socialism is amplified by every means that modern technology can provide, is going all out to sow distrust of the Soviet Union's diplomatic initiatives. But that too is something we have encountered before. Yes, realizing our conception of security, namely, equal security for all through disarmament, is going to take hard work and struggle, the breaking of old, long-established usage and attitude. But the world cannot and must not live in the old way in face of the nuclear menace. That we firmly believe.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

● There comes a time in every man's life when he wants to pause to look back over the past years and do some summing up. I have many years behind me. For 35 years I have been working in the field of industrial engineering. I began as a team leader and rose to the position of assistant manager of a construction trust. My own life has taught me that the Soviet Union is the only country in the world where people can really experience the joys of free creative endeavour. It is Soviet power that gave me and other Jews like myself whose parents were born in the Jewish pale and who could not hope for a happy future for their children the opportunity not only to acquire a higher education and interesting work but to realize their creative abilities to the full, the opportunity to feel themselves equals among equals.

The "violation of human rights in the U.S.S.R." smears are circulated by the Zionist leaders who, while continuing to perpetrate barbarous crimes in Lebanon, pretend to be concerned for the fate of Soviet Jews. We have no need of their concern. My life and that of my parents is the most conclusive testimony against those who slander my country.

YAKOV LOTSTEIN
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

● The Soviet Union, believing reduction of armaments to be one of the most realistic ways of averting a nuclear war, declared a moratorium on nuclear explosions and prolonged it for three months. But how did the U.S. respond? It invited Soviet experts to attend one of its nuclear tests in Nevada. I think the Soviet Union was quite right to turn down the invitation. Another important Soviet initiative—the pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons in the event of an international conflict—also met with the stubborn refusal on the part of the U.S. to assume any such commitment.

I feel that if the United States plans to break the U.S.S.R. by the force of arms it is setting itself an absolutely unattainable goal. The Soviet Union will always be able to find a worthy answer to any provocation.

COSIMO DE CANDIA
Mola di Bari, Italy

WE APOLOGIZE

A regrettable mistake occurred in our issue No. 3. In Andrei Arkhipov's article "The Peaceful War of Martin Luther King," the word "coloured" was used a number of times in place of "black." We apologize for any offence this translation error may have caused our readers.

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The U.S. is a great power. Its people want and are able to work. They are famous the world over for their enterprise and ingenuity. So why are so many hungry people queueing up in the streets for a plate of soup! Why do thousands in this wealthy country die only because they cannot afford simple surgery! Turn to pp. 18-23 for Henri Alleg's account of the deep-seated social and spiritual crisis bedevilling the U.S. today.

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SOCIALISM ON THE EVE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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Until quite recently attempts to envisage the world in the year 2000 were regarded merely as a bold projection which, although based on certain elements of scientific prognostication, contained a fair admixture of fantasy and utopianism. We recall the "futurological boom" in the West in the early sixties, born of a breakthrough in science and technology. It was accompanied by social utopianism of a reformist kind which "slotted" capitalism into the third millennium.

This trend in capitalist futurology has not substantially altered today, except for some changes in terminology and nomenclature. At the same time it tries increasingly to invoke science and high technology—microelectronics, information science, robotics, biotechnology and the global problems of civilization. This results in futurological concepts of two kinds—either extremely pessimistic, or technocratically optimistic, heralding the advent of a "new civilization," the "information society" of the 21st century in which new technology will, it is claimed, eliminate the social distinctions between capitalism and socialism.

The Marxist View of the Future

On the other hand, Marxism has always sought to determine the **real social** directions leading to the future. It proceeds from the principles that underlie **dialectical materialist** methods of cognition of the objective laws and trends of historical development. Their extrapolation into the future (allowing, needless to say, for the corrections and elaboration inevitable in the course of progress) amounts, in fact, to a scientific forecast which excludes in any form the utopianism the founders of Marxism warned against.

While pointing out that communism was the future of man's historical development, Marx and Engels stressed that "we are for continuous unbroken development, and it is not our intention to dictate any final laws to mankind. Preconceived notions of the future society's organization? You won't find a hint of them in our works." Here is a more definite statement: "But, if constructing the future and settling everything for all times are not our affair, it is all the more clear what we have to accomplish at present." Lenin also warned against going into excessive detail and giving imagination free play in visualizing the future society of socialism and communism.

Such a profoundly scientific and realistic approach to the future, to the prospects of socialism and its development into communism, imbues all the theoretical works of present-day Marxists as well. It found its full embodiment in the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme which defined —as Mikhail Gorbachev put it in his report at the October 1985 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee—the pivotal points of the Party's general line, its economic strategy in the extremely complex and responsible present historical period which marks a turning point in both domestic and international development. Consequently, the turn of the 21st century is a milestone in the development of socialism as well.

Guided by the Marxist principle of steady, continuous development through contradictions and conflict of opposites, and adhering to the Marxist practice of giving systematic and historical analysis to social phenomena, our Party has worked out a comprehensive concept for accelerated socio-economic progress and the attainment of a qualitatively new state of socialist society on this basis.

In the draft Guidelines for the economic and social development of the U.S.S.R. for 1986-90 and the period of up to 2000 these objectives are translated into the language of concrete target figures. In this way the prospects of socialism are outlined in real and practical terms. Consequently, what we have here is the **planning** rather than just the scientific forecasting of the future.

As a result, the year 2000 has drawn closer to us, as it were, and become an immediate concern of the present generation, "a matter to be dealt with today," as Marx put it. The drafts of the new text of the CPSU Programme and the above-mentioned Guidelines formulate the objectives of the present with an eye to the future.

Topping the list of priorities are certainly those directly connected with attaining a qualitatively new state in our society in the economic, social and political spheres, as well as in the spiritual life, and moulding the new man. What is to take shape on the basis, and as an extention, of our present achievements will constitute, in outline, the socialism of the turn of the 21st century (continuously improving in the process of its transition to communism), civilization of a historically new type surpassing capitalist civilization on all counts. This process constitutes the essence of the present epoch ushered in by the Great October Revolution.

> **"Carrying out a revolution is not enough—the revolution must be upheld, the workingman's notions of equality and justice, his social and moral ideals must be translated into life. In other words, it is necessary to build a new society capable of giving man a life worthy of him."**
>
> **(From Mikhail Gorbachev's replies to L'Humanité)**

The prospect of building communism, and our immediate objectives which make necessary an acceleration of the socio-economic progress of socialism, presuppose profound and substantial

changes in all spheres of life. The draft documents to be submitted to the 27th CPSU Congress emphasize, above all, radical transformations in the material and technical base of society and in the productive forces through continued scientific and technological advance, and the wide-scale introduction of highly efficient machinery and production processes which ensure, along with the all-round development of society and the individual, a harmonious interaction between man and nature. By the year 2000 we are to have doubled our economic potential, to have increased national income and industrial output nearly 2 times and labour productivity 2.3-2.5 times.

The Party's economic strategy is aimed, in this connection, at accelerating scientific and technological progress as the chief means of raising production efficiency. This presupposes a major reorganization of production, and the improvement of socialist production relations and economic management practices and techniques.

Humanism at Its Loftiest

New—or "high"—technology calls not only for superior production and management structures, but also for high standards of social relations, culture and environmental ethics. Under socialism, however, this is not merely a "technological" demand. As it gears the entire social process to the good and interests of man and makes his all-round development the **aim in itself**—i.e., places the main emphasis on **humanist values**, socialist society—which is developing into communist society in the course of its improvement—subordinates all spheres of life to this objective. The Party's programme documents point out that in terms of social progress this means the promotion of socialist self-government and its advance towards communist self-government—the highest form of social organization.

There is still a long way to go in this direction. But we dismiss as absurd assertions by bourgeois ideologists to the effect that our system is "non-democratic" and "authoritarian." We criticize the concepts of "state socialism" afflicted with "bureaucratic-etatist" metastases as concepts directed against Soviet, socialist democracy.

The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme gives an objective assessment to what has been done, and clearly outlines the prospects for the process in the course of which "the activity of state organs will assume an increasingly non-political character, and the state as a specific political institution will gradually become redundant." At the same time the draft notes the complexity of this process and the need, under present-day conditions, for the development and strengthening of the Soviet socialist state, and an ever fuller disclosure of its democratic and popular character along with promoting the people's self-government in every way. This calls for the optimum functioning of the Soviets of People's Deputies which constitute the political foundation of the U.S.S.R. and the chief link in the people's socialist self-government. The working people, work collectives and mass organizations must be more actively and effectively involved in dealing with state and social questions and democratization of management and decision-making at state level through selecting the best suggestions, considering and comparing various opinions, and so on.

"Active social involvement, fighting against injustice, against breaches of the law and offences against public morality—this is a norm of conduct in our society enshrined in the Constitution."

(From Mikhail Gorbachev's replies to L'Humanité)

All this is a tangible demonstration of the humanist nature of socialism and its advantages over capitalism, which to an ever greater extent alienates man both on the production and social planes and makes him the object of ever more refined exploitation.

This further aggravates the main contradiction of our time, that between socialism and capitalism, in its new manifestations. These relate to the social systems' potential, and its ability to offer immediate and real solutions to the global problems on which mankind's very existence and development depends. On the eve of the 21st century socialism will assert itself more and more as a social system capable, in the highest degree, of solving the global problems of civilization for the good of man.

The draft programme documents pay due attention to these problems. This is especially true of global problem No. 1—safeguarding peace and ending the arms race. Note is taken of the fact that no **scientific** forecasts of what socialism will be like on the eve of the 21st century are possible without tracing its wider relationships and interdependencies on a global scale.

In his statement of January 15, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, specially underscored the need for a change for the better in the international arena. The Soviet Union has come up with a programme of stage-by-stage consecutive action to **free the world from nuclear weapons within the next fifteen years, i.e., before this century is out.** This programme contains concrete and realistic proposals taking into account many aspects of the contemporary political situation and the prospects for its development up to the year 2000.

The changeover to vigorous action aimed at ending the arms race and reducing armaments is tied up with the need to solve the ever more urgent global problems involved in protecting the environment, searching for new energy sources, combating economic backwardness, famine and disease. A future without wars, and without arms—this is the prospect opened up by the Soviet proposals aimed at achieving a lasting peace and nuclear disarmament towards the end of the 20th century.

Internal Growth Potential

In drawing up its strategy for peace and social progress in the international arena, the CPSU attaches prime importance to the further promotion of friendly links between our country and the other socialist states in all spheres: economic, scientific, technical, ideological, interparty relations and international activity. The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme lays special emphasis on the activization of all forms of political cooperation, the deepening of socialist economic integration, "the pooling of the fraternal countries' efforts in all key areas involved in the intensification of production and the speeding up of scientific and technological progress so as to accomplish together an objective of historic importance—the advancement to the forefront of science and technology with a view to raising still higher their nations' living standards and strengthening their security."

The Comprehensive Programme of scientific and technological progress of the CMEA member states in the period of up to 2000, adopted by the 41st (special) CMEA session in December 1985 (which is to become the basis of a coordinated and, in many cases, joint scientific and technological policy), sets the following priority lines of scientific and technological progress:

electronization of the national economy, comprehensive automation including the introduction of flexible automated systems, atomic power engineering, the development of new materials and the techniques of their production and treatment, and biotechnology.

In perspective, economic, scientific and technological cooperation among the CMEA member states will be assuming new forms and tendencies characteristic of socialism which, as the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme points out, "is to increase socialist countries' technological and economic immunity against the hostile actions of imperialism and the impact of economic crises and other negative processes characteristic of capitalism."

This does not mean, of course, that the countries of the socialist community will refrain from promoting extensive economic, scientific and technological relations with the countries of the capitalist system. The world economy and world science are a reality, and there is no ignoring it if maximum results and the highest possible standard of research are to be attained. Therefore our Party's main programme documents stress the need for promoting and improving the forms of cooperation with capitalist countries on the basis of mutual benefit and equality. The latter condition is of substantial importance, the idea being that socialism cannot allow its further development to become dependent in any way on external circumstances, including not only hostile actions on the part of imperialism, but the world economic, research and technological situation in general.

Depending on its own growth potential, world socialism will increasingly reveal, on the eve of the 21st century, the wealth and variety of its advantages and its possibilities for improvement. Extremely important in this connection are the theses and conclusions found in the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme which have to do with the accomplishment of such international objectives as strengthening the unity, building up the might and increasing the influence of the socialist community, with due account taken, at the same time, of the uneven levels of its countries' economic and political development, their historical and cultural traditions and the conditions obtaining in them.

Noting the fact that their social development does not always follow a straight line and that its every major stage poses new complex problems the solution of which involves struggle, creative quests and the surmounting of certain contradictions and difficulties, the CPSU stresses the need for all-round cooperation lest there should appear grounds for differences capable of doing damage to common interests. "The experience of the CPSU and of world socialism as a whole shows that the vital factors for its successful advance are: loyalty of the ruling Communist and Workers' parties to the teaching of Marxism-Leninism, creative application of this teaching, close ties between the Party and the broad masses of the working people, the consolidation of the parties' authority and leading role in society, strict observance of Leninist norms of Party and state life, the promotion of socialist government of the people; due regard for the real situation, the timely and scientifically substantiated solution of problems that arise; basing relations with the other fraternal countries on the principles of socialist internationalism," says the draft of the new text of our Party's Programme.

Special importance attaches in this connection to the pooling of the fraternal parties' efforts in the study and application of the experience gained in socialist construction, communist education of the working people, in the development of Marxist-Leninist theory, the deepening of its creative character, and upholding its revolutionary essence. The activization of collective thinking, a steady expansion of intellectual exchanges, and cooperation in the fields of science and culture contribute to the further deepening of friendship amongst the socialist countries.

This activity in the sphere of ideology has many components and presupposes a higher degree of coordination. "Disseminating the truth about socialism, exposing imperialist policy and propaganda, repulsing anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, fighting dogmatic and revisionist views—all this is achieved more successfully when the Communists act as a united front," says the draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme. This is not merely a wish for the future but a conclusion drawn from the vast positive (and, most unfortunately, negative) experience accumulated in the course of the development of world socialism and its theory.

The Pluralists' Gordian Knot

Today we witness numerous attempts—made not only beyond but, in a number of cases, within the bounds of Marxist socialist thought—to prove that there is such a thing as "the crisis of Marxism." Our Party's programme documents and works by Marxist scholars analyzing the problems of today give the lie to this allegation which, more often than not, merely reveals the theoretical sterility of certain Marxists.

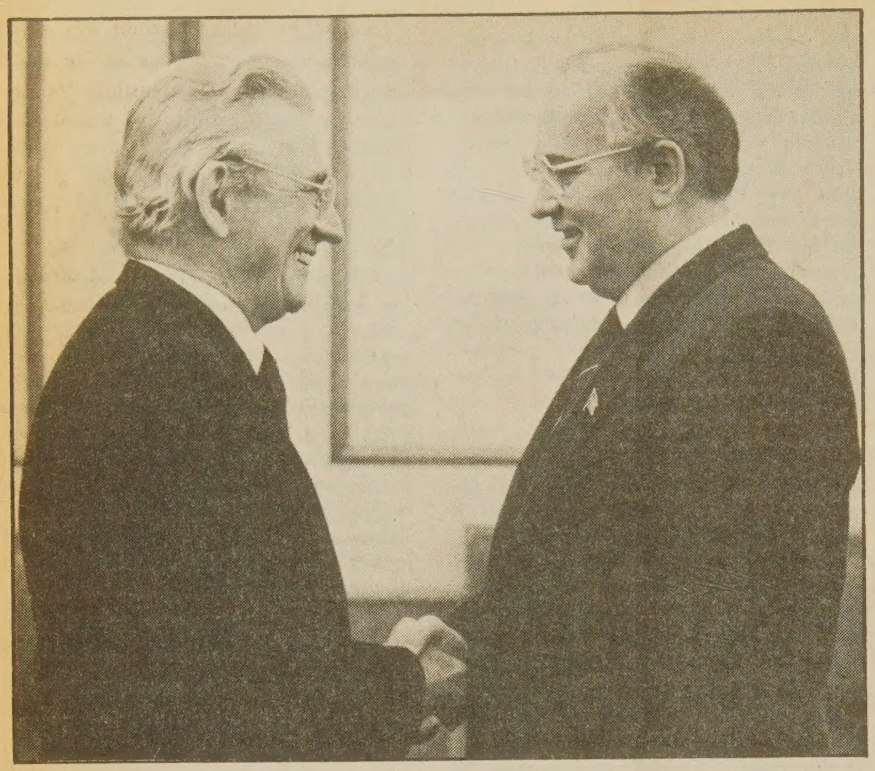
Many modern discussions on socialism on the eve of the 21st century have created a kind of Gordian knot (in addition to the real problems and contradictions). This knot cannot be untied by means of abstract theoretical discussion. It must be cut using facts drawn from life, which means identifying new and positive trends and problems in socialism on which its future depends.

Goethe said in his time: "In the beginning was the Deed!" And more: "Dear friend, all theory is grey, but the tree of life is green." In the beginning was the deed of the Great October Revolution. Today its word and thought and the strength of the advanced class that saw it through have not spent themselves as it is sometimes alleged, but have enhanced their creative potential and are the guiding force of the socialist nations and the progressives across the world. Creative Marxism is alien to dogmatism, scholastic theorizing and didacticism, which are rooted in the past, and to the manipulation of notions and ideas, behaviour stereotypes and patterns of thought overcome by the very course of socialist development.

A look at present-day practice and at the future of Marxism and socialism will show that the concept of "pluralizing Marxist and socialist thought" is groundless. It is beneath serious scientific and theoretical criticism. Indeed, its adherents concentrate on just one aspect of the process—the need for a difference of opinion—which calls for dialogue, and so on. They fail to take account of the fact that all this is merely the external manifestation of the scientific pursuit of the objective truth which is indivisible and independent of subjective opinions, geographical and national characteristics.

The concept of "pluralizing Marxist and socialist thought," which leads to the distortion of the scientific principles of the dialogue on the problems of socialism on the eve of the 21st century is attended by direct attacks against socialism—as is unfortunately the case in a number of publications on the subject "Socialism on the Eve of the 21st Century" under discussion here.

The draft of the new text of the CPSU Programme points out that "while remaining fully equal, and respectful of each other's national interests, the socialist countries will move towards ever greater mutual understanding and draw ever closer together. The Party will facilitate this historically progressive process." The course taken by the competition between socialism and capitalism and the future of world civilization depend on the successes of each socialist country's creative work and on the unity, might and influence of the socialist community as a whole. ■



On February 4 Mikhail Gorbachev received Roland Leroy, political director of L'Humanité and a member of the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party, together with the paper's Moscow correspondent Gérard Streiff and its foreign news editor José Fort. Mikhail Gorbachev handed them the text of his replies to questions put by L'Humanité. They also had a cordial and comradely conversation, in the process of which the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party said: "In our foreign policy we always take the interests of France and its people into account, as is illustrated once again by our latest proposals contained in my January 15 statement. Incidentally, when wording our proposals we think it only natural to take into consideration the lawful interests not only of France, but, for example, of such a partner of ours as the United States. For otherwise such proposals would be unrealistic."

Seen here are Mikhail Gorbachev and Roland Leroy before their conversation.

TASS photo

MOSCOW—DAVOS TV HOOKUP

TO ENRICH THE DIALOGUE

We in the U.S.S.R. have always concentrated on aspects of international economic relationships and given thought to the part our country plays in international economic exchanges. We closely follow developments in the world economy, science and technology, and this is especially so today as we prepare for that high point in our national life, the next CPSU congress. The Soviet leadership's attitude to broader international economic cooperation was outlined by Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov in his February 5 television appearance, the first two-way transmission of its kind between Moscow and Davos in Switzerland, where 600 businessmen and politicians from capitalist countries were holding their annual World Economic Forum.

The interest in Soviet economic policies on the international scene does not derive from purely commercial considerations. The international tensions in recent years have hit hard at business cooperation between the two world systems. Many Western businessmen and politicians also realize that while the arms race generates economic growth and technological advance it also exacerbates the West's own economic and social problems. Evidently they are prepared to seek an alternative to military, political and economic confrontation.

There is such an alternative, the Soviet Prime Minister said. "This is to end the arms race, initiate disarmament and establish broad economic ties between all countries, capitalist, socialist and newly independent."

The draft of the U.S.S.R.'s new five-year plan offers prospects of broader cooperation with the West. The salient feature of the plan is the major economic restructuring it envisages. Basic assets are to be modernized, and the engineering industries are to advance more rapidly. Restructuring will stimulate foreign economic ties and improve the forms they take. It is quite possible, Nikolai Ryzhkov said, for Soviet enterprises to establish close scientific and technological links with firms in capitalist countries.

Whatever forms East-West business cooperation may assume, however, it must inevitably rest on the abolition of all discrimination and commercial and credit restrictions. The U.S.S.R. will never accept such a "division of labour" when only obsolescent commodities and technologies are fobbed off on us. We certainly do not need such "technological transfers."

The view that technological cooperation is a one-way traffic from the West to the U.S.S.R., and that without external technological assistance we would supposedly have to abandon scheduled programmes, is quite unfounded, Nikolai Ryzhkov stressed. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, "we should be talking about the reciprocal exchange of new technologies and other high-technology products, and not their transfer."

Today the exchange of technologies is in the mainstream of world trade. The U.S.S.R. takes this into account when focussing more on the increased import and export of high-technology products. As the questions delegates at the Davos forum put to the Soviet Prime Minister showed, businessmen in the capitalist countries also have a stake in broader cooperation in just this area of mutually advantageous exchanges. What stands in the way is, chiefly, the policies pursued by Western governments. While paying lip service to the idea of commerce on a wider scale, they in fact erect artificial barriers in the way of the more promising trends in business cooperation.

Wide-scale East-West cooperation is already possible today. This was the basic conclusion of the Davos forum. As

its president Gaston Thorn, former chairman of the Commission of European Communities, observed, the fact that the Soviet Prime Minister had found time to put across the Soviet view was significant, indicating as it did respect for the businessmen and politicians from the 52 countries represented at Davos. It also showed a desire to promote and enrich East-West dialogue in the interest of mutual understanding.

F. GORYUNOV

U.S.S.R.—U.S.A.

EDWARD KENNEDY IN MOSCOW

The political atmosphere created by the Geneva summit last November indicates that real conditions exist for an improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Preparations are now under way for a new Soviet-American summit which will make concrete the understandings reached earlier. In these circumstances the visit of Senator Edward Kennedy to Moscow at the invitation of the Soviet parliament was a politically significant event. Edward Kennedy is one of those sober-minded American politicians who realize that both countries are equally interested in the normalization of their bilateral relations.

During his talks with Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze the senator said he had come to Moscow to exchange views on all questions that affect Soviet-American relations. Though not an administration official, he tries to find at least a partial solution to these questions. Edward Kennedy showed keen interest in the question of reducing the intermediate-range missiles of both countries. He said the position of the Soviet Union, which does not link this question with the need to halt the development by the U.S. of its space-based anti-ballistic missile system, increased hopes that Washington would soon agree to reach an accord on a reduction of such missiles. The senator also paid much attention to the question of arms control. The present level of technology does not allow any country to conceal the fact of holding nuclear weapon tests. Edward Kennedy believes this makes real implementation of the idea of a nuclear freeze which he energetically advocates in U.S. Congress.

The senator pointed out that the Gorbachev plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 should be carefully studied by the West, and he made a number of reservations concerning President Reagan's "star wars" programme. Nuclear disarmament will become possible, he said, if the sides agree to a reasonable compromise. As regards regional conflicts, the main task of the United States and the Soviet Union, in his opinion, is to prevent them breaking into a world war.

During the talks attention was drawn to the special importance of the Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing. The cessation of nuclear tests by Washington, following the Soviet example, would help considerably to provide a more favourable climate for a new Soviet-American summit. On the whole, Congress could play a more constructive role in the development of Soviet-American relations. Not a few good statements are made on Capitol Hill about the need for joint efforts to avert the nuclear threat and solve the current world problems. It is now time to put these statements to practical effect.

Speaking on Soviet television, Edward Kennedy said he wanted the two countries to compete for the benefit of mankind, not in arms buildup. Cooperation has already been started in medicine and space exploration — some of the spheres for the application of efforts that would be appreciated by all nations.

B. SERGEYEV

CUBA

TOWARDS NEW OBJECTIVES

Each new Communist Party congress in a socialist country excites profound interest throughout the world communist and working-class movement, and revolutionary and progressive forces. As far as the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, which took place on February 4-7, is concerned, the very special interest it excited largely derives from the fact that the achievements and prospects of the first country in the Western Hemisphere to embark upon socialist construction were under discussion.

Without undue modesty Cubans may take pride in their achievements, recognized, incidentally, not only by their friends, but by many of their opponents. After all, in a country where for decades neocolonialism had been the order of the day, the shaping of a new society necessarily started virtually from scratch. Today the Island of Liberty has a well-organized state system, a planned economy, and well-developed education and health services.

Here are some figures to illustrate Cuba's achievements since the last Party congress in December 1980, figures that Fidel Castro cited in his report. The gross social product averaged a 7.3 per cent rate of increase, as against the 5 per cent planned, while industrial growth rates averaged 8.8 per cent.

The sugar industry is still vital for Cuba as the main branch of its national economy and primary source of hard currency. In the five years under review sugar output increased by 12.2 per cent.

Socialism's cardinal principle—everything for the good of the people—is unswervingly implemented in Cuba. Social security allocations have shown a marked increase in the five years under review as a result of which the health services for all categories of the population, especially children, have improved. Average life expectancy exceeds 74.

At their congress, Cuban Communists saw all the achievements of popular power primarily as a point of departure for further efforts. Much was said about

the drawbacks, lapses, mistakes, and still outstanding issues, such as, say, the absence of a comprehensive approach to planning which resulted in the disproportionate development of different branches. A recurrent theme in the speeches was the paramount importance of remedying shortcomings.

Having summed up the country's achievements and condemned its failings, the congress charted the political and economic strategy for further national development. The new tasks and objectives are clearly defined in the Central Committee report, the unanimously approved draft Party programme and in the main guidelines for Cuba's socio-economic development between 1986 and 1990. "The implementation of the Party programme," the congress declared, "will lead our people to its historic objective of completing the building of socialism in Cuba, an objective for which generations of revolutionaries strove and which is feasible today thanks to the revolution. . . ."

The congress reaffirmed Cuba's unswerving adherence to its Party's tried and tested foreign policy based, as the resolution states, "on Marxism-Leninism, the immutable experience of proletarian internationalism, close cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community, firm ties with the world communist, working-class and revolutionary movement, and militant solidarity with national liberation movements and peoples fighting for their development, sovereignty and genuine independence." The resolution stresses the importance of the Soviet effort to preserve peace and ensure a change for the better in international affairs.

Cuba is building socialism in a situation beset by unremitting imperialist intrigue. Of late the U.S. has drastically stepped up action against Cuba. It continues to infringe its air space. It has unashamedly announced fresh plans for armed aggression and subversion, though Cuba has more than once declared its willingness to negotiate in order to discuss the over-long conflict with the U.S. and secure peace and better bilateral relations.

Delegates acclaimed the statement made by Yegor Ligachov, who led the CPSU delegation, that the U.S.S.R. had honoured and would continue to honour its commitments to Cuba with unswerving fidelity. The people of Cuba may rest assured of the Soviet Union's constant solidarity.

L. MIRONOV

SOUTH YEMEN

RETURNING TO NORMAL

Early this month a Soviet ship put into Aden with a cargo of building materials for joint Soviet-Yemeni construction projects. Then, on February 8, the newspaper Arbaatashar Oktobr reported the arrival of medical personnel and building experts from the Soviet Union.

At any other time such news would not have attracted particular attention, as cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen has always been lively. Now, however, it illustrates the country's gradual return to normal. It is not surprising, therefore, that the news has been widely commented on, and not only by local news media. It is seen as tangible evidence of the Soviet Union's policy of friendship towards the people of Democratic Yemen, which is of especial importance now after the January tragedy, when internal differences erupted into armed conflict and many Soviet and other foreign specialists and their families were obliged to leave.

Other positive signs are also to be seen. In Aden public services are operating once more, damaged buildings are being repaired, shops have reopened and municipal transport facilities are again functioning. For the leadership of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) and the government, the first ten days of the month have been a time of intensive effort. At a plenary meeting on February 6 the YSP Central Committee discussed Party construction, ideology, economic affairs and foreign policy. Ali Salem al-Baidha was elected General Secretary and Salem Saleh Muhamed his deputy.

On February 8 the Presidium of the Supreme People's Council (SPC) met. On the same day the SPC held its fourth session to elect Haydar Abu Bakr al-Attas, who was the country's Acting President during the crisis, Chairman of the SPC Presidium. The session also appointed a new government, with Yasin Said Numan, hitherto Minister of Fisheries, as Premier.

Democratic Yemen has a new leadership. What policies will it follow? The answer is supplied in the decisions that the YSP Central Committee took at the above-mentioned plenary meeting. It has reaffirmed the country's unchanged foreign policy of consolidating security and stability in the Middle East and has voiced solidarity with peoples struggling for national liberation and progress. In his address to the people, Chairman of the SPC Presidium al-Attas emphasized that relations with the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries would feature prominently in the country's foreign policy.

The overall picture would seem to confirm that Democratic Yemen fully intends to adhere to the progressive course initiated by the revolution of October 14, 1963.

D. ZGERSKY

JAPAN

SELF-TRAPPED

With every year the "Northern Territories Day" ceremony, observed in line with a Japanese government decision, is increasingly reminiscent of a scratched gramophone record. On the morning of February 7 ultra-Right groups dispatch cars with powerful loudspeakers to obstruct the normal operation of Soviet missions and agencies. Members of the committees for the return of the northern territories, which have close links with the ruling party, fill the old Kudan Kaikan hall. The same old faces are always to be seen on the platform. Year in, year out ministers and premier himself turn up, and mumbled speeches are hastily delivered.

Listening to the speakers and peering at the faces of participants in this revanchist rally as they absent-mindedly thumbed through propaganda booklets, I could not rid myself of the impression that they were all sick and tired of this political show now being staged for the sixth successive year. That public in-

terest in the "problem of the northern territories" was flagging had been reiterated even at a special symposium sponsored by a government agency two months ago. Some of the political scientists invited said there was no point in putting territorial claims to the U.S.S.R. and that in the overall context of Japanese-Soviet relations the "problem of the northern territories" was of little significance. Even that notorious anti-Sovieteer Hiroshi Kimura had to admit that the Japanese leadership had been caught in its own trap; the northern territories question restricted Tokyo's freedom of manoeuvre in political dialogue with Moscow and obstructed the normalization of bilateral relations.

A trap is a crafty and dangerous device. But, when one knows how the simple mechanism works, it cannot be that difficult to pull its steel jaws apart. Surely it is time to get rid of the shackle and move on without it.

Y. TAVROVSKY
Our Own Correspondent

Tokyo

UNITED NATIONS

TIME TO MOVE FORWARD

The closing of the General Assembly session does not mean a "breathing space" in the work that goes on at U.N. headquarters. An important part of the winter programme is the session of the special U.N. committee on enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of non-use of force in international relations.

Ten years ago the Soviet Union proposed concluding a world treaty on this question the signatories to which would assume the commitment to refrain from the use or threat of force, and from the use of nuclear and any other mass annihilation weapons on land, on sea, in the air, or in outer space. Such a treaty, Moscow believes, is essential in the nuclear age. It was for the purpose of drafting it that the special U.N. committee was set up.

However, the final drafting of the text was held up by several countries on the pretext that the treaty would merely "reiterate" the principles already laid down in the U.N. Charter—an argument that deliberately overlooks the fact that the principle of prohibiting force as a means of settling international disputes has been concretized, apart from the Charter, in a number of bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements and requires corresponding formulation in international law.

In view of the importance of the speedy conclusion of work on the treaty and taking account of the positions of many countries at the 40th General Assembly, the Soviet Union proposed, as an interim measure, to work out a declaration on the non-use of force in international relations.

This principle, together with its logical implication—the peaceful settlement of disputes—constitutes the basis of the norms of international law relating to the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of friendly relations between states. This was stressed by U.N. Under-Secretary-General Carl-August Fleischhauer who opened the meeting of the special committee. There are good grounds for expecting that the current session will yield positive results.

These hopes are well founded. After all, the United Nations has proclaimed this year a Year of Peace. The country that initiated the treaty, the Soviet Union, is backing up its proposal with concrete actions that offer an example to other countries. It pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and now it has proposed a stage-by-stage programme for delivering the world from nuclear weapons by the beginning of the next century.

By working out a declaration on the non-use of force, the Soviet representative stressed at the session, the special committee would move forward in fulfilment of the task entrusted it by the General Assembly—to give maximum effectiveness to the principle of non-use of force and thereby help to improve the international situation. The next move is up to the U.S. and those who have been dragging out the work of the committee.

From Our Own Correspondent

New York

CANADIAN PEACE VISIT

"We have come to the Soviet Union to see everything for ourselves, to ask, and to learn," said a delegate from the Canadian Peace Congress, made up of various Canadian anti-war organizations, welcoming newsmen at the Soviet Peace Committee on February 5.

The visiting representatives of Canada's growing peace movement are mostly young people, which is no doubt why they are so concerned about what tomorrow has in store. They spent a fortnight in Leningrad, Kiev, Lvov and Moscow, candidly discussing the world's future with members of the Soviet public.

"My organization, the Canadian Peace Congress," its executive director Gordon Flowers said, "heartily acclaims the Soviet Union's latest peace bids. The most important thing about them is that they speak of concrete actions and deadlines, as well as the general principles of nuclear disarmament. We have sent letters supporting the Soviet initiatives to members of our government and every Canadian MP."

"Back home," Dieter Heinrich, President of the World Federalists of Canada, said, "many of us hope, we shall be able to meet politicians and tell them what we think about the new Soviet proposals. As for me, I will say that Mikhail Gorbachev's statement illustrates a new mentality, a new approach and a sincere desire for lasting peace."

The ordinary Canadian does not want to have nuclear weapons on his country's territory and is opposed to cruise tests and involvement in "star wars." He prefers good-neighbourly relations, mutual understanding and peaceful cooperation with the Soviet Union.

V. GALIN

LOOKING FOR A CASUS BELLI?

Things are happening in the Mediterranean today of a kind that the region, for all its turbulent history, has not seen for a long time. Hardly had large-scale U.S. Navy exercises ended off the Libyan coast than it was leaked that new, still bigger ones were on the way. "U.S. planes and warships will most likely cross into Libyan territorial waters," the Rome paper Repubblica wrote. The inference clearly is that a new provocation is in the pipeline. It follows hard on the heels of the one that has already taken place, Israel's unprecedented act of state piracy that has aroused worldwide indignation.

The recent incident involving a Libyan passenger plane is common knowledge. Israeli fighters forced the airliner, on a flight from Tripoli to Damascus, to land at a military airfield, where passengers were frisked and their luggage searched. Amongst them was Assistant Secretary-General of the Syrian Baath Party Abdullah al-Ahmar. Israeli spokesmen now say they did not have their sights on him but were looking for "terrorists." But can this be considered a justification? On the contrary. If terrorist hijackings are condemned by the international community, a state engaging in similar practices deserves still greater censure. Tel Aviv's attempts to invoke international law do not hold water. Washington's continuous support gives Israel a virtual carte blanche, and the American veto in the U.N. Security Council further endorses it.

The Israeli fighters, according to the world press, were tipped off about the Libyan airliner by the U.S. ships cruising off Libya's shores and keeping the country under electronic surveillance. Naturally, Washington is denying complicity. But it is symptomatic that the State Department's legal adviser, Abraham Sofaer, should have declared, just a few days before the incident, that he was prepared to vindicate any such action regardless of the fact that it breached international law. This is more than just a hint, it is open instigation to state terrorism. But with what objective in view?

An answer to this question requires an excursus into the recent past. The U.S. suffered a series of setbacks in its efforts to impose a capitulationist settlement on the Middle East. Hard as it tried, it was unable to extend the Camp David process. The Camp David-type treaty that Lebanon was made to sign following the Israeli invasion was revoked some months later. Nor was this the only point at which the process stalled. The Amman agreement concluded last year between King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat, which the Americans made much of, aroused such indignation in the Arab world that even its signatories are now reluctant to speak of it. A trend in an entirely different direction is now gaining momentum. Rejecting outright any capitulationist or separate deal, the Arabs demand a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

Clearly this trend in no way suits Washington or Tel Aviv. Hence their feverish attempt—before it becomes irreversible—to give a face-lift to the old scheme and peddle it to Arab leaders. It was presumably to meet some of these leaders that Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres went to London at the end of January. The keynote of U.S. press comment in connection with the visit was that as Peres is to be succeeded in October by his partner in the ruling coalition, head of the ultra-Right Likud bloc Itzhak Shamir, who is against any compromise with the Arabs, there is not much time left for Arab leaders to avail themselves of Peres's "pliancy."

This is blackmail pure and simple. But blackmail alone is not enough and it is accompanied by a show of strength—the U.S. at sea and Israel in the air—the aim evidently being to create casus belli, that is, a pretext for striking at those Arab regimes they regard as standing in the way of their plans. Such intimidation is hardly likely to succeed. One thing, however, is becoming increasingly clear: a Camp David-type "settlement" is synonymous with plans to establish imperialist domination in the Middle East. Moreover, it is a threat to the security of the whole Mediterranean, which, as its name suggests, occupies a central position geographically. Today the political implications of its position are of special significance, as states on its littoral include socialist, Third World, and NATO countries. The threat or use of force in the region is bound to exacerbate international tensions. Not everyone, however, may find this a deterrent.

Dmitry VOLSKY

American political circles impatiently looked forward to that week. It was to indicate what the Administration would do over the next twelve months and after. On February 4 Reagan addressed his State of the Union Message to Congress, on February 5 the draft budget for the fiscal year 1987 was presented, and finally there was the White House legislative programme.

In U.S. history there have been times when a State of the Union Message had the entire nation agog. Take President James Polk's announcement of the discovery of gold in California in 1848 which initiated the gold rush. The message from the present White House incumbent contained nothing so dramatic. Indeed, on the contrary, it surreptitiously glossed over the theme even of the "second American revolution" by means of which Reagan had tried to impress the electorate following his reelection a year ago. As a matter of fact, the message took less than half the traditional 45 minutes, which the President's aides explained by a desire to "concentrate on the basics," not secondary concerns.

True, during the cyclical economic upswing no thought had been given to the length of the President's speech; but now that economists have pinpointed the close of the current year as the start of a new recession this factor has suddenly acquired significance.

Perturbing Symptoms

American politicians often sidestep unpleasantness with a brief "no comment." This time was no exception. The only difference was that missing from the ratiocinations about the "American dream" were not only comments but also facts which, among other things, showed that though everyone could entertain this dream it would become real only for a select few. The changes observed since 1980 have only served to place this dream still further out of the reach of most Americans. Thus, over this period, due to tax reforms the increasingly wealthy 20 per cent elite have gained another annual $1,500 per capita, while the 20 per cent on the lowest rung of the social ladder have lost another $200.

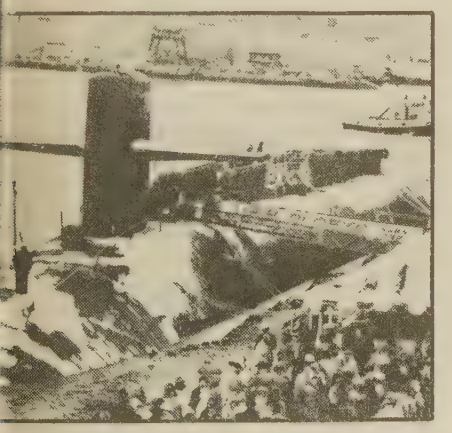
Now, $200 is nothing to laugh about, considering that over these five years electricity and gas have become respectively 36 and 45 per cent dearer, public transport fares have increased by more than half again (with a New York bus ride costing at least a dollar), college and university tuition fees have gone up by 66.2 per cent,

CONSERVATIVE AGENDA

President Reagan's State of the Union Message

while a visit to the doctor and hospital bed will cost respectively 46 and 63 per cent more than in the early 1980s.

This list could be continued ad infinitum. The term "Reaganomics," so energetically touted recently, is quietly slipping out of propaganda usage. This is not surprising as, due to this "wonder-working remedy," not just individuals, but whole categories are being economically hamstrung. Indeed, what America's farmers are experiencing nowadays is quite openly qualified as an "agrarian crisis." The "postponed



The newly-launched nuclear submarine Alaska, the seventh in the Trident class. Concern is definitely not for the American family but the profits of Pentagon contractors.

UPI-TASS photo

penalty" of the national debt and deficits is also part of the price of "Reaganomics." "It took 189 years, five major wars, and a catastrophic depression to reach the first trillion, five years to reach the second trillion," says Senator John Chaffee. Over this period the overall debt is estimated to have increased much faster than the GNP. Given such rates, in ten years from now there will be a $2.25 debt to every dollar of the GNP.

There was one more reason why the President's speech writers preferred to highlight rainbow prospects instead of assessing the causes of these realities. The coming autumn will see the mid-term Senate elections. The Republicans, who hold a Senate majority, seek might and main to preserve this majority. For them everything the President says today is part of the election campaign. What American politicians ever owned up to mistakes on the eve of elections?! This is equally valid for 1988. In effect, the presidential race between the two biggest bourgeois parties is already off to a good start. Though Reagan is constitutionally obliged to divest himself of his presidential mantle, each potential Republican candidate craves to profit from his political capital. Among those making no bones about their presidential aspirations are such familiar personages as Vice-President George Bush, Representative Jack F. Kemp, Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, and his predecessor Howard H. Baker.

After the refusal of the Democrats' favourite Edward Kennedy to stand, they focussed on Gary Hart, who stood in the last elections. Since he said he would not run for the Senate this year, this is taken to mean another try for the presidency. New York State Governor Mario Cuomo and Arizona Governor Bruce Babbit, co-chairman of the middle-of-the-way Democratic Leadership Council, have also established political action committees, which organize and finance campaigns for any potential candidate.

Concern for Defence Contractors

This has all been clearly taken into account. No wonder the Reagan message highlighted such "electoral" themes as concern for the average family and the average American. As for content, both economists and politicians are of one mind in noting that this "agenda for the future" offers nothing new except proposals to study various issues. This, even Republicans admit, is "what you do when you want to stall." Which is understandable. "If you look at the President's budget," Representative Morris K. Udall noted, "the only families that are going to be happy are the families of defence contractors." True enough, $311.6 billion of the $994 billion expenditure planned will be for the Pentagon. Furthermore, it will get another $8.7 billion for a nuclear weapons programme under the Department of Energy budget. These mammoth appropriations are almost 12 per cent more than military spending for the current fiscal year; over the next five years, they will increase the defence budget by 42 per cent. Nor should one overlook the fact that there is money for the Pentagon concealed in the budgets of other government agencies. Last year $500 million came from NASA funds for Pentagon space projects. This has all enabled independent experts to claim categorically that the Administration has understated actual military spending.

The White House is preparing to hit hard at John Doe not only by increasing the portion of the tax screw meant for non-productive military expenditure. Last year Congress rejected Reagan's proposal for a cut in socio-economic programmes. In its present budget the Administration has not only reaffirmed intentions to abolish these programmes, but has also augmented the list. The 40 federal programmes now earmarked for reduction include those for professional training, employment, credits for impoverished farmers, food stamps for the needy, aid for hungry children, loans for students, and public transport.

However abbreviated the President's message may have been, there was enough room for the traditional section on U.S. foreign policy. This aroused special interest. The public hoped at last to hear a more detailed reply to the Soviet programme for ridding the earth of nuclear weapons, which Mikhail Gorbachev had set out in his statement. The more so as by its genuine forward look it presents a tangible basis for tackling many issues of con-

cern to Americans, including those of a domestic nature.

Priorities Unchanged

Regrettably, not only was the inclusion of the international section traditional, but also its content. Some newsmen tried to give credit to the President for not calling the Soviet Union "the empire of evil" this time. However, most refused to comment, since what the President said jarred with the spirit of the times and the Geneva accords. He again attempted to supplant the vital issue of mankind's survival with talk about regional conflicts. Again the bogey of the "Soviet threat" and Soviet "military superiority" was trotted out. And again one could clearly discern between the lines an attempt to convince the Americans that an arms buildup could force the U.S.S.R. to disarm exclusively on American terms. This old line of confrontation is reflected in the part of the defence budget related to space-based strike weaponry. The "star wars" programme has been made the priority and the expenditure connected with it is to be boosted from this year's $2.7 billion to $4.8 billion next year.

In his message Reagan repeatedly emphasized that all this was supposedly dictated by concern for the U.S.'s younger generation and the desire to meet its interests. Again the speech writers ignored the obvious. Student opinion polls published early this month show that they see as the primary objective not the support for the contras and their ilk in Angola and Afghanistan which the President called for. Indeed, 91 per cent favoured a more concerted effort by the Administration to improve American-Soviet relations, while 76 per cent said that the Administration should give priority to nuclear disarmament.

However, the White House is not embarrassed. Its present incumbent has his own programme. Late last month Reagan told a select coterie of political allies: "We must tell the American people that the progress we made thus far is not enough, that it will never be enough until the conservative agenda is enacted..."

The State of the Union Message and the draft budget have demonstrated what America's powers-that-be regard this "agenda" as being, what they think "progress" implies, and to whom it applies in American society.

A. ARKHIPOV
Our Own Correspondent

New York

Gone after three decades of "hereditary rule" is the Duvalier dictatorship, one of the most brutal of pro-imperialist tyrannies. But Haiti's future is still obscure

DICTATOR DEPOSED— WHAT NOW?

RUSLAN TUCHNIN

It was well after midnight when a large transport plane loomed in the darkness. It taxied slowly up the runway without lights or identification. The hundred or so newsmen, who had been milling around Port-au-Prince airport since dusk, pricked up their ears, while some even identified the airplane as a U.S. Air Force C-141.

Flight to Nowhere

One day previously, the American CBS television company had tossed a bombshell into the plethora of rumours already in circulation when it reported that Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier had been sounding out diplomats from France, Greece, Spain and elsewhere as to whether he could ask for political asylum. This time, as the pressmen at the airport realized, the rumour had substance.

As a motorcade approached the gangway, the dictator was spotted at the wheel of his favourite BMW with his wife Michèle Bennett plus a score or so of relatives and hangers-on. In response to questions from the newsmen the sergeant of the President's guards simply reiterated, however: "The President can't possibly go, as he is president for life."

The uncouth soldier no doubt had no inkling that Jean-Claude Duvalier owed his title to the good graces of the U.S., which had now decided to discard him. Few knew that the U.S. ambassador had run off his legs to get the bankrupt dictator out of the country as soon and as far away as possible. He not only patiently coaxed Jean-Claude whose vainglorious wife meanwhile urged him to pay no attention, but even sought the French government's consent to provide the runaway Haitian despot with refuge at least until he found a permanent place of residence.

Father, Son and Washington

Haitians learned of the collapse of the dictatorship on the morning of February 7. There was jubilation everywhere. For nearly thirty years the nation had groaned under the jackboot of the army and police of one of the most brutal tyrannies in Latin American history. Haiti had broken world records for poverty. The rule of the Duvalier dynasty, first the ferocious Papa Doc and from 1971 on, his dim-witted son Baby Doc had made the country a living hell.

Indeed, whatever aspect of life in Haiti is mentioned, human tragedy confronts one. One in every two children dies before reaching the age of four. Poverty and hunger are rife. According to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 60 per cent of the population in the capital, 83 per cent in the provincial towns, and 94 per cent (sic) in the country subsist below the absolute poverty level and eat an average of no more than three meals a week. More than half the able-bodied population is unemployed.

People fled to escape the terror and appalling poverty. More than a million Haitians emigrated under the dictatorship.

It is small wonder that the joy Haiti's

There has been unrest in many Haitian cities and towns. Seen here are demonstrators in the streets of St.-Marc.

TASS photo

millions felt at their deliverance from the detested tyranny was tinged with anger against the servitors of the Duvalier clan. In Port-au-Prince Papa Doc's mausoleum was smashed. Dozens of tontons macoutes and "leopards," the retinue of cutthroats who had terrorized the population, experienced the vengeance of the angry mob.

Washington is currently pretending to have been ignorant of the three dark decades of untold suffering that the people of Haiti experienced. Yet it was the U.S. that solicitously provided the two Duvaliers with millions of dollars in annual handouts, and placed at their disposal the sophisticated weapons they used in their daily reprisals against the masses. Branches of U.S. corporations, in collusion with the enterprising relations and hangers-on of the two dictators, laid hand on all the more or less profitable factories and banks in the country and were thus directly to blame for the economic and social plight of the people.

Shortly after Papa Doc's death, some Washington politicians realized that it was now necessary to buttress the unsteady dictatorship forthwith, as it was beginning to crack under mounting popular resistance.

People in the U.S. Administration intimated to Baby Doc that it was time he gave his sinister regime a face-lift, if he wanted to keep going. At first it was suggested that he resign and stand for presidential election. However, opposition to the dictatorship was so massive that even with his tontons macoutes and "leopards" Baby Doc could not rely on a successful electoral outcome.

The Haitian despot entered into political haggling with his powerful patrons. Eventually the two sides agreed that the post of president for life would remain unchanged and that matters would go no further than constitutional amendments somewhat easing the restrictions on the opposition bourgeois parties. A hastily concocted "referendum" gave Duvalier 99 per cent of the vote.

The U.S. State Department realized that such half-hearted reforms were patently inadequate. However, the petrified system of oligarchic exploitation and secret police violence resisted the projected "liberalization." Even Right-wing parties did not fall for the dictator's line.

Duvalierism Without Duvalier Won't Avail

Popular resistance to the tyranny quickly gathered momentum in the second half of 1985. The November events in Gonaïves, which culminated in the shooting of youth demonstrations, stimulated broad nationwide action against the dictatorship.

The Reagan Administration was faced with the dilemma of either continuing to help the ruling Duvalier dynasty hold onto the reins of power or of sacrificing the political cadaver that Baby Doc had become, to preserve the anti-popular regime more or less intact through minor cosmetic surgery.

Naturally, the first alternative appealed more to the hawks in Washington, as to have "one's own man" is always safer; though stupid, he had learned to understand what Washington wanted. However, the risk seemed too great. The surging tide of popular protest could have swept away not only the despot, but even the very foundations of the military dictatorship upon which U.S. dominion in the country was founded.

The prospect of "Duvalierism without Duvalier" seemed far more attractive. The idea was to shelve the more odious figures in the dictator's retinue to pacify the resurgent opposition and push into the limelight men schooled in political depravity by Papa Doc and Baby Doc, and possessing police expertise in the suppression of the masses; men especially who in looking out for their own safety in this present period of trouble would do as they were told.

There is no need to list all the names in the "National Council" and the cabinet it formed. These bodies are chockfull of Duvalierists. General Henry Namphy, who heads the "Council," is a career officer who served under both Papa Doc and Baby Doc with whom, according to The New York Times, he was on "friendly terms."

What can Haitians expect of such men spawned by the terrorist dictatorship? They have already shown their true faces. Though they have released political prisoners, they have also, under pretext of "maintaining law and order," promulgated a state of emergency, imposed a curfew, and are taking reprisals against demonstrators who demand punishment for the associates of the escaped despot.

As far as one can see, Washington, which knocked together the present government, is pleased with the way things have turned out. The U.S. has already promised to provide the new rulers of Haiti with urgent financial assistance.

Though it is hard to make any safe predictions with respect to a country newly awakened from a thirty-year-old nightmare, it can be said with certainty that the working people of Haiti, who bore the brunt of the dictatorship, want radical, not superficial changes. Their struggle continues. As René Théodore, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the United Party of Haitian Communists, has declared, the progressive democratic forces in the Haitian resistance movement have no intention of heeding Washington's "advice," but will continue to fight for Haiti's deliverance from imperialist bondage. ■

Bonn's reaction to the Gorbachev Statement

COALITION ZIGZAGS

The press conference recently held by the deputy head of the parliamentary CDU/CSU, Volker Rühe, drew many newsmen as he had promised to state his views on the latest Soviet peace initiatives. The interest was understandable, given that Bonn's official reaction to these proposals had until then been expressed only in a brief statement by Hans-Dietrich Genscher. The Foreign Minister had merely said that, together with its partners, the federal government would carefully study the "new elements" in the Soviet proposals, and had voiced the hope that they would "stand the test" at closer examination.

The document that Rühe presented to the newsmen differs from Genscher's statement both in scope and content. He does not think it expedient to advance "comprehensive disarmament programmes." True, he notes some "constructive elements" in the new Soviet programme, but does not consider its main idea — phased elimination of nuclear weapons— to be one of them. Moreover, he goes on to list the "constructive elements" (dealing chiefly with verification) with reservations of every sort. In his opinion, there are considerably more "problematic" than constructive elements in the Soviet proposals. Nuclear disarmament, he claims, is made dependent on three "preliminary conditions" which the CDU/CSU cannot accept. What are these "preliminary conditions"? First, renunciation of the Strategic Defence Initiative. Second, the stopping of nuclear tests "from the very beginning" of the disarmament process. Third, a pledge from Britain and France to freeze their nuclear potentials following the elimination of American and Soviet medium-range missiles in the European zone.

Rühe's "arguments" were quickly picked up by the capitalist press which, juggling with facts, has mounted a vicious campaign against the Soviet peace programme.

Votaries of "Star Wars"

Commenting on Mikhail Gorbachev's statement, all politicians, military experts and news analysts in the F.R.G. compare his plan for the universal phased elimination of nuclear weapons with President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, which, as the President claims, is also aimed at ridding mankind of the nuclear threat. "It is reasonable to believe that the scrapping of nuclear weapons will make space defence systems useless," a leading Social Democrat, Egon Bahr, concludes. "The dismantling [of nuclear arsenals— **A.T.**] is cheaper and more secure than the arms race in space." One would think the Soviet plan knocks the bottom out of the main argument, albeit a false one, of the votaries of "star wars."

But Rühe thinks differently. He gives his preference to the Reagan concept because, he says, it "objectively renders nuclear weapons useless" while the Soviet plan "depends completely on the subjective good will of the states concerned." But does Rühe himself believe that nuclear stocks would become useless with the appearance of strike weapons in outer space? Judging from his document, he does not. He questions the expediency of destroying nuclear weapons in general on the grounds that "there have been no armed conflicts between East and West" since these weapons have appeared.

Rühe is not alone in arguing in this way. The proponents of the Strategic Defence Initiative, who contend that it will make nuclear weapons useless, have at the moment no desire to part with them. Life on the powder keg seems to them calmer and more secure. The Frankfurter Allgemeine even writes about "the happy decades lived by West Europeans under the American nuclear umbrella."

The Soviet proposal that Moscow and Washington mutually renounce the development, testing and deployment of space strike weapons is presented by Rühe as a "preliminary condition." However, he forgets one important fact: at the Geneva summit last November the American and Soviet leaders confirmed that the prevention of the arms race in outer space and the reduction of nuclear armaments on earth should be tackled as a single issue.

However, in defiance of the commitments it has assumed, Washington has not given up the "star wars" project and is even trying to legalize it. With the blessing of the CDU/CSU faction in the Bundestag, Rühe is hastening to aid his American friends. The Geneva talks should, in his view, decide where the research supposedly allowed by the ABM Treaty ends and the development of anti-missile space weapons banned by the same treaty begins. As a matter of fact, the ABM Treaty does not "permit" any research. In the unanimous opinion of scientists, it is virtually impossible to draw the line between the various stages in the development of an anti-missile space shield, representing as it does an extremely complex system. Besides, why carry out research if the application of its findings is definitely banned by the treaty. It would evidently be a futile debate leading the Geneva talks away from their clearly formulated objective. Now that Bonn is discussing with Washington the terms of participation in the "star wars" project, Rühe's proposal can only be explained by the desire to save SDI at all costs.

The same reasoning underlies the position of Rühe and his political friends on the question of ending nuclear testing. Shortly before Rühe's press conference, the question was discussed by the Bundestag on the initiative of the opposition Social Democratic Party. The debate was sparked off by a statement made by Lothar Ruehl, Secretary of State at the Defence Ministry. Speaking at the Bundestag committee on military policy, he declared that, one, "the carrying out of a limited number of nuclear tests remains essential," two, "control over nuclear armaments cannot begin from the complete termination of nuclear tests" and, three, the question of ending nuclear tests will acquire importance only "in the long term."

The Social Democrats accused the government of a turnabout. Indeed, until recently (the last time the Chancellor spoke on the question was on January 9) Bonn supported, at least in words, the cessation of nuclear tests, provided the necessary verification was ensured. References to verification have been groundless in the past as well, and now that Moscow has agreed to international forms of control and on-site inspection, pretexts of this kind have simply become redundant. In these circumstances Bonn has dramatically altered its stand. It has fallen into line with Washington, which needs tests to improve first-strike nuclear weapons intended primarily for Europe. Tests are also carried out with the aim of obtaining the powerful laser beams needed for the SDI programme. As Social Democratic deputy Hermann

Scheer justly observed, "those who endorse the SDI programme are also expected to block the termination of nuclear tests."

Creating Obstacles

The Federal Republic, the country with the highest concentration of nuclear weapons on its territory, should be particularly interested in the Soviet proposal for the complete elimination of American and Soviet intermediate-range (both ballistic and cruise) missiles in the European zone. Much has been written and said about the threat to the F.R.G. from SS-20 missiles. However, pretexts of different kinds are now being advanced here too. One of them is that the Soviet missiles stationed in Asia can easily be transferred to the European part of the country. It is well known, however, that the missiles deployed in the east are not designed for removal to other areas. They have been installed there to counter the relevant nuclear weapons of the United States. Moreover, the Americans can also easily deliver their Pershings to Western Europe across the Atlantic, and, incidentally, they have considerable experience in this respect.

It is likewise suggested that SS-20 missiles "threaten" Western Europe even from their positions in the east. This is downright falsification. Under the Soviet plan the European zone includes areas east of the Urals from which missiles can reach Western Europe.

Rühe saw one more "problematic element" in the Soviet plan, namely, the proposal that the elimination of tactical nuclear arms, i.e., weapons with a range of up to 1,000 kilometres, also be envisaged at the second stage. In this way, Rühe said, the West would be "placed at a disadvantage, having no guarantees that these [Soviet—A.T.] systems will indeed be dismantled." The Soviet Union is thus again suspected of the intention to "outsmart" the NATO countries. But Moscow has never had such intentions, and it has once more confirmed the proposal for ridding Europe of nuclear weapons, both intermediate-range and tactical. The scrapping of American and Soviet intermediate-range missiles, both ballistic and cruise, in the European zone, would merely be the first radical step in this direction. Why would the West be "placed at a disadvantage" after the first stage? Do not the NATO countries have tactical nuclear weapons? They have, and plenty. These weapons are targeted on the socialist countries. Speaking about the equal right of all Europeans to security, Rühe should have also taken into account the interests of the Soviet Union's allies.

Here is one more argument against nuclear disarmament put forward by Rühe. "Implementation of the Soviet proposals," he says, "would serve to consolidate the Warsaw pact's superiority over NATO in conventional armaments." This is not a new argument. It was also advanced to justify NATO's refusal to assume the commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Needless to say, the "Warsaw pact's superiority" in conventional arms is no more than a myth, which is sustained by tricks of various kinds. In estimating the balance of forces, the propaganda booklets and white papers issued by the Bonn Defence Ministry do not take into account the armies of France and Spain and the weapons stored in NATO depots. Andreas von Bülow, former parliamentary Secretary of State at the Defence Ministry, recently published some research on this subject. He concluded, in particular, that, "first, NATO is considerably stronger in conventional armaments than it itself admits and, second, NATO maintains a larger army than the Warsaw pact." The Soviet Union has no intention whatever of "consolidating" the present, obviously very high, level of military confrontation in Europe. On the contrary, it proposes that conventional weapons and armed forces also become subject to agreed cuts. Is Bonn ready for such cuts? This is doubtful in view of the intention to prolong the period of military service so that the Bundeswehr would have no less than half a million men by the year 2000.

It is difficult to find "constructive elements," to use Rühe's own words, in the document he presented at his press conference. In conclusion he said that more or less substantial disarmament measures were impossible as long as political tension in East-West relations existed. But does the main cause of this tension not lie in the runaway arms race, which generates mistrust and suspicion? Can this tension be removed by deploying first-strike missiles and placing weapons in orbit? East and West are confronted primarily with the problem of ensuring security, of averting a thermonuclear catastrophe, and ultimately with the problem of survival. This problem can be tackled only by joint efforts. Such is the reality of our age, and it calls for a radically new mentality. But judging from the document submitted by Volker Rühe, far from all in Bonn have learned to revise their thinking.

A. TOLPEGIN
Our Own Correspondent

Bonn

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

MARIAN ORZECHOWSKI

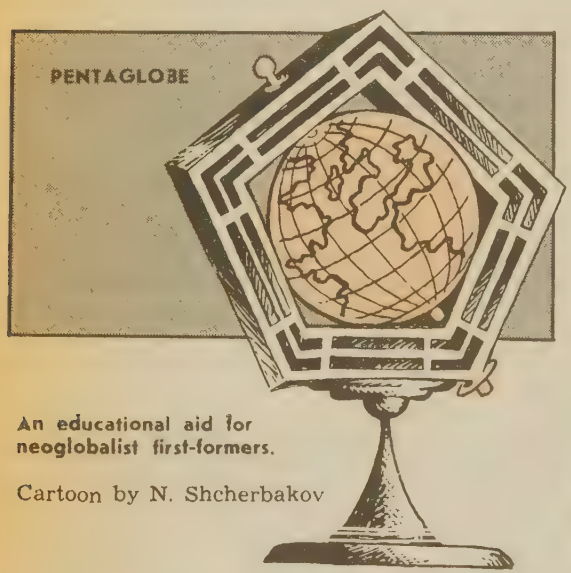
Marian Orzechowski, whom the Polish Sejm appointed the country's Foreign Minister last November, was born in Radom on October 24, 1931. He graduated in history from Leningrad University in 1955, holds a doctorate in the subject and is also a professor. Between 1969 and 1972 he was director of the Wroclaw University Institute of Political Sciences and between 1972 and 1975 he was the University's Rector. From June 1984 until his present appointment he held the office of Rector of the Academy of Social Sciences.

At the Polish United Workers' Party's 9th Extraordinary Congress, Marian Orzechowski was elected a member of the Party's Central Committee. At the fifth plenary meeting of the Party's Central Committee in October 1981 he was made a Central Committee Secretary, and in November 1983 an alternate member of the Central Commitee's Political Bureau. Between May 1983 and June 1984 he was General Secretary of the National Council of the Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth, of whose Presidium he is currently a member.

He has written many scholarly works dealing with the modern history of Poland and its working-class movement, as well as the history of political thought and his country's relations with Germany and Czechoslovakia.

TAKE HEART, LELLOUCHE!

It is hard, indeed, not to agree with a man who says that "a simplistic violent altercation is no longer convincing, so let us not politicize beyond the reasonable." Sensible, isn't it? After all, politicizing beyond the reasonable is insane in our present clever age. So let us not indeed transcend the reasonable, the bounds of common sense. Let us not simplify and turn a dispute into a politicizing altercation from which no truth emerges, but from which, on the contrary, truth can only suffocate and die. Let us talk like civilized people, let us try to convince one another and not compete in abuse.



An educational aid for neoglobalist first-formers.

Cartoon by N. Shcherbakov

Truth to tell, the afore-quoted utterance from an interview granted by French Defence Minister Paul Quilès to the newspaper Provençal has no bearing on international debates as to the destiny of peace or the problems of nuclear disarmament that concern all sane people today. What the minister had in mind was the internal political altercation, which is becoming increasingly bitter on the eve of the general election. Evidently the Minister would like very much to dovetail opposition party slogans with the concepts of the ruling Socialist Party. Which is quite understandable. As far as can be seen, France is to experience a unique kind of political symbiosis, for if next month the Right return, as predicted, to form a government by winning a parliamentary majority, they will rule with a Socialist President. What will such coexistence yield? It is, of course, not our concern, though we have long been partial to France and its people and are not indifferent to how Soviet-French relations develop after the March assault on the Palais Bourbon, and what tone the dialogue between our two countries, which initiated détente in Europe, will take.

The anti-communist and anti-Soviet orgy marking the election cam… threat" concept, w… has somewhat mo… "threat" emanates … the abolition of … wrong to view Mi… armament plan as … Lellouche, Associa… of International … vietologist, wisely … to the American … "It is a sophistica… the foundation of … tem in Europe. A … diplomatic equiva… siles that the Sov… now apparently s… ing that last word … "exposed" us ove… us piece by piece … ly.

The horrifying … Soviet plan does … on the part of the … non-nuclear Europ… so keenly demand… the immediate a… SS-20s as well as … Europe." Now Le… wily old bird, he … that the SS-20s ca… the French and Br… is not asking for. … European nuclear …

According to L… the crafty Russian … to drop the SDI,' … Europe."

Of course, one … say. It is not they … of official refusal … level. Unfortunat… influential backing … to encourage the … "France does no… conclude deals wi… clarified the gov… "criticism [of "st… France from appro… ican ally to reinfo…

So take heart, F… of opportunities … in tune with the …

WHO'S WHAT

"SAINT" RETURNING

He wanted to be called a "saint," but believed the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" to be a blasphemy. Not because he was a Sikh, and not a Christian. Simply Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the late leader of the Sikh extremists, preached "Thou **shalt** kill." He ordered his followers entrenched in the Golden Temple of the Punjabi city of Amritsar to "buy arms instead of TV sets and fridges." And he also told them who these arms should be used against. With his .45, ever girdled to his waist, Bhindranwale said he would "drown India in blood" and kill Indira Gandhi. His hit list included statesmen, politicians, army officers, newsmen, in short all those who opposed his programme for Punjab's secession from India and the establishment of the "State of Khalistan." Shouting "Bhindranwale! Khalistan!", the saint's henchmen gunned down the people he had proscribed.

When the terrorists had the blood of hundreds on their hands, the government ordered the storming of the Golden Temple. Found in one of the vaults was the body of the terrorist leader who had preferred to fight it out to the death.

"It is not his body. He is still alive. He has escaped. He will return. He will have his revenge." Rumours, of course, but though Bhindranwale was dead, there were those who very much wanted him to go on killing.

Now the extremists are again entrenched in the Golden Temple, having expelled the Sikh "moderates" by force of arms. These are the Damdami Taksal, who venerate Bhindranwale as their leader, the reactionary Indian federation of Sikh students, and the Sikh splinter group known as the "United" Akali Dal, whose boss is Bhindranwale's father.

The killer "saint" has not experienced a resurrection, despite the rumours to the contrary. However, he is most worthily represented by members of his family, including, in addition to his father, a nephew, Jasbir Singh, whom the extremists have designated chief "high priest" of the Golden Temple. True, the "high priest" could not come to Amritsar, as he is detained behind bars for having so zealously and consistently carried out his "saintly" uncle's orders.

Though Bhindranwale has not been restored to life, his hit list has been revived. As they slay their victims, the terrorists chant: "Bhindranwale! Khalistan!"

Because Bhindranwale means to kill and Khalistan, to sow strife.

L. YELIN

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V. KHROMOV

PERES THEN AND NOW

The official Certificate of Esteem and Respect sent to the family of Israeli soldier Yoav Spiegel who was killed in Lebanon was returned to Israeli Premier Peres's office along with a letter from the deceased soldier's family. Tel Aviv's refusal to institute an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Israel's aggression against Lebanon, they wrote, was an insult to the memory of their dead son. "We will continue to campaign for an inquiry and for the prosecution of all those responsible for the war."

Yoav Spiegel's family has dared to remind the Premier of his earlier promises.

When in June 1982 the Israeli army overran Lebanon the then opposition Israel Labour Party (ILP) decided to speculate on anti-war feeling. Its leaders, including Peres, personally took part in a demonstration in front of the Knesset. On the first anniversary of the start of the aggression, the ILP called for an official inquiry. Peres told the Knesset that it was essential to investigate "every aspect" of the war and all the government's decisions.

However, the ILP leader made a sharp turnabout when, in the autumn of 1984, he became head of the coalition government. He "forgot" his promises to withdraw the Israeli occupation forces from Lebanon. His angry indictment of the previous government faded out seemingly of its own accord. On the contrary, when the matter was again raised last May as to whether it was not high time to punish the men responsible for Israel's involvement in this criminal venture, Peres "advised" his Knesset faction "not to press for an inquiry." "Is there any point in every man of us hiring a lawyer to investigate what the other has been doing!" he rhetorically exclaimed.

There is indeed no point. And so Israeli families continue to receive from Lebanon "certificates of esteem and respect."

A. VLASOV

"BEER," "MENGELE," ET AL

Question: In Hamburg skinheads pummelled to death a helpless prostrate Turk. What do you think about that?

Answer: The skinheads who did that did the right thing.

Question: You really think so?

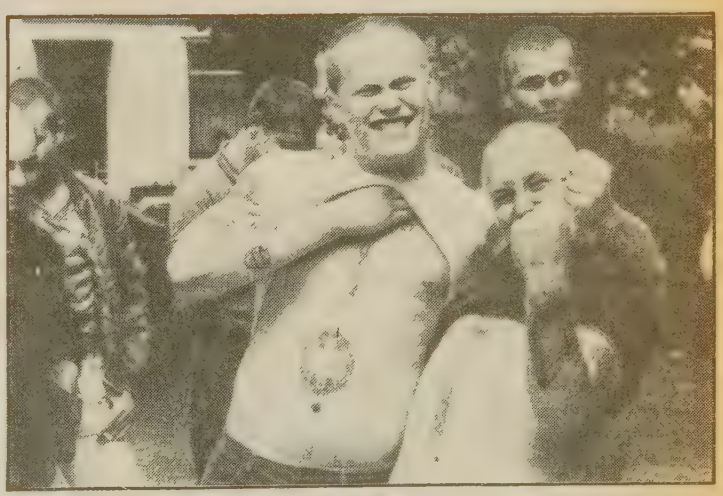
Answer: I think the Hamburg action was brilliant.

Question: Why do you hate foreigners?

Answer: I'm all for the Aryan race. Foreigners, Jews, and the others are all inferior.

The questions were put by reporters on the Hamburg weekly Stern. Skinheads gave the answers, skinheads like those pictured above. Their pseudonyms are "Beer," "Mengele," and the like. Excellent specimens of the Aryan race, aren't they? How noble they look! No doubt the blood that flows in their veins is a delicate blue.

True, they prefer to spill the red blood of others. As in Hamburg. Time and again, the town fathers argue that these are isolated cases. They regret the lapses in character training. Alas, similar incidents are occurring in many other cities and towns of the Federal Republic of Germany. In Reutlingen, an Italian was cruelly beaten up, in Munich a Turk was hanged. The country has 2,000 skinheads. Are they the result of 2,000 failures in character training? Rather they are the result of failures in the socio-political system, which has found places for many of these two thousand only on the streets.



The skinheads are under the paternal eye of the neonazis, who nowadays employ them more and more often. Thus, "Mengele" and "Beer" stand guard at neofascist rallies and, when ordered, incite scuffles with Left-wingers. Their unsavoury appearance does not embarrass the Rightists a whit. What counts is that they have shaved their brains along with their hair, leaving empty heads that can be stuffed with nazi ideas and slogans.

Doesn't this remind you of an earlier day, when the real Mengele strove to protect "the purity of the Aryan race?"

N. ZHOLKVER

Reproduced from
Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

HENRI ALLEG: SOS AMERICA!

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Inscription on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty

"SOS America!" is the title of a book by the well-known French writer on current topics HENRI ALLEG recently put out by the Messidor Publishers, Paris. Below our associate editor VICTOR TSOPPI interviews the author of this notable piece of investigative reporting which has found a wide response among the French reading public and has been highly appraised by democratic opinion in that country.

Why, Henri, did you choose this particular subject at this particular time?

For one thing because right now the French are literally overwhelmed by propaganda eulogizing today's United States and the wise men in its administration — America rid of crisis, America making a new start, America the one and only model, America, America, America!

Does that mean that France has no mission of its own, that it is incapable of constructing its own model?

That is exactly what is being said. France, it is contended, has wasted too much time on such nonsense as class struggle, on playing at Lefts and Rights, at liberty, equality and fraternity, at democracy, all of which smells of mothballs and deprives business of its muscle. And that is why it is bogged down in crisis. There is nothing left for us poor unfortunates but to follow in America's wake and lose no time in mastering its most up-to-date technology of resolving social and economic problems.

Some in the United States actually believe that France has already made its American choice. The Boston Globe, for instance, recently wrote of "an increasing drift away from politics by French intellectuals disgusted by traditional arguments and stereotypes ... and a growing interest in economic growth and in American-type entrepreneurs. There is even a growing interest in Ronald Reagan, whom some in France admire for lifting government controls from individuals eager to enrich themselves. Is France becoming more 'americanized,' more pragmatic and less ideological, more globally-minded and less provincial, more interested in profits than in political rhetoric?"

The American paper is of course exaggerating, in line with the United States' imperial ambitions. But there is more than a grain of truth in what it says. Because of this I decided to look at America through the eyes of a Frenchman.

I began by making a study of all the economic, sociological and political science writings worthy of note that were available in Paris. Then, in the summer of 1984, I made a trip to the U.S. I was there for several months at the height of Reagan's campaign for reelection. I had to leave the U.S. before his electoral victory. But I did not miss much. At home in Paris I witnessed on TV the triumph of this man, who is indeed remarkable, whatever you might think of his qualities. But not only he and his supporters were triumphant. French television too was jubilant to the point of shedding tears of joy. As if Ronald Reagan's victory were a blessing bestowed also upon the French.

Why SOS?

Did the title occur to you from the start?

No, it came to me only after I had read the finished manuscript.

I read in it, Henri, two meanings. Perhaps three. First, a distress signal from America addressed no one knows to whom.

It does have that meaning.

Or one can take it as a warning: look out, beware of America!

That too. But, frankly speaking, a third meaning did not occur to me. What do you have in mind?

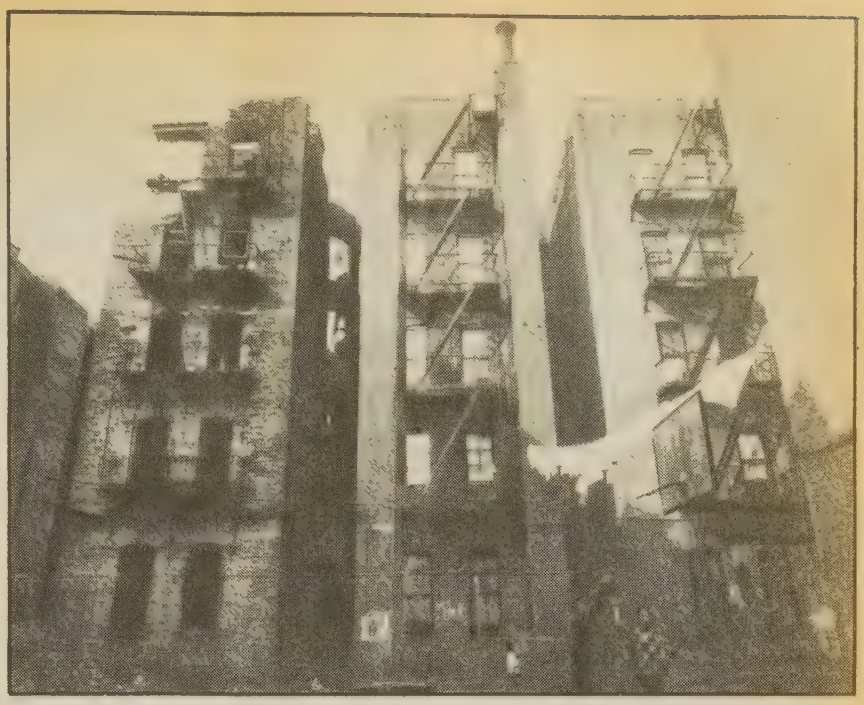
It seems to me that "SOS America!" could be interpreted as a cry for help addressed to great America. After all, it is not only the "new liberals" in France who are looking for and finding in the United States of today an example to emulate.

You are probably right. An obsequious, if not a downright servile attitude to the U.S. now has a great many votaries and is propounded by no few "ideologues" inclined to draw hasty conclusions. They are often described as the "American party," which is drawing more and more recruits from political strata connected in one or another way with the bourgeoisie. This is not abstract idolatry, not merely the political vogue. It is a rather stable gravitation towards a radical recasting of our country after the transatlantic model. For instance, a high-ranking French delegation that was shown over Silicon Valley, California, which is famous for its supermodern industries, went into ecstasies over what they saw. This was just what France needed, they said.

The grievous economic situation in Lorraine, for example, is common knowledge. Enterprises are being closed down and thousands of iron and steel and engineering workers are being laid off. The explanation given is that the plants have become obsolete and are no longer profitable. Therefore they should be scrapped. It won't be easy, but somehow we'll get over it. And if and when we do, we'll build new super-electronicized and super-computerized plants like those in California. And the workers who sweated it out at red-hot ovens or at high-speed conveyors will sit in white smocks and press buttons. Just like in America. "America," one of its ardent admirers said, "is France 15 years hence."

When I set out for America I promised myself to be totally free from all

Henri Alleg in New York.



This is also New York.

prejudice. I would look around and see for myself. Listen without trying to fit all fresh impressions into stereotyped patterns. I was aware that I was not going to discover America, that great power on which so much depends in the present-day world and of which so much has already been written, by both critics and apologists. I knew of course that the genius of the American people had brought it to the summits of science and technological accomplishment. That the average living standard of the statistical average American is high. And I saw for myself that the Americans really do know how to work, that they like to work, to work well, conscientiously, not in a slipshod way. American efficiency and enterprise are not myths.

America Versus America

Now most likely you will say: but on the other hand...

No, I won't. The conjunction "and" not "but" is in place here. The efficiency and industriousness are all there. And organically coexisting with this America is another — an America that distresses, shocks and repels anyone who would like to believe in the infallibility of America, the sanctity of its way of life, the universality of its judgement, its humanity and love of peace.

In a word, a land of contrasts.

I would say a land of permanent and now steadily sharpening conflict in which working America is ever harder pressed by the America of Big Business which is becoming increasingly egoistic and ruthless. Though this may sound like a platitude, the United States is in deep crisis, perhaps the deepest in its history—an economic, social and political crisis, a crisis of the spirit.

Coming from you, Henri, that is not a surprising conclusion. What other view of capitalist America could anyone expect from a Communist!

Yes, I am a Communist. But that is not only my view. It is the summation of my observations as a reporter and the assessments given in talks I had with Americans themselves—men and women from different walks of life, different positions in society, different levels of political consciousness.

I was fortunate, primarily because I did not have very much money. This put me in the same position as Americans who also were short of it. I avoided hotels, even cheap ones, and was often put up by total strangers to whom someone had phoned or written that, though a Frenchman and even a Communist, I was all right. Factory workers, teachers, office workers, newspapermen and trade union activists, they sent me on from one to another, from city to city and state to state. In this way I came to know a great many wonderful people—men and women, old and young, white, black, Chicano, Asian. Many of them lead a dreary existence, to put it mildly, carefully count their dollars, wear themselves out in the endless struggle for survival. But they have not lost their human dignity. They love their country and the pain of their disillusionment is all the greater when they see what goes on around them. And the more tragic their question: whither America?

In the streets of the big cities of the richest of countries one sees day in and day out endless queues of the hungry, waiting with downcast eyes for a bowl of charity soup or a piece of bread and cheese. In one such queue I saw a young man with a poster on his back saying: "Reagan, give me a job. I'll buy my own cheese."

And how many other crying signs of distress there were! For instance, to economize government funds the authorities had closed a great many psychiatric hospitals. According to the American Psychiatric Association, more than a million homeless and hungry people with socially dangerous mental disorders roam the streets of the cities. One of them, quite decently dressed and wearing dark glasses, came up to me in a public square, greeted me politely and said: "You know what I did with him?" He laughed. "I had a knife, took it from a butcher. With that knife I cut off his head to see what he was hiding from me in there... Good, eh! Just don't let anyone bother me. Or

I'll cut someone else's head off and take a look inside." And went on his way. Another madman shouted to me not to dare collect letters addressed to him at the post office....

But, Henri, perhaps these are only extreme cases, terrible but extreme! Of course they do not do credit to present-day America. But many public opinion polls show that on the whole Americans are quite well off and are by and large satisfied with their country.

I don't think it is as simple as that. I am sure things are not so wonderful. Does that average statistical well-to-do America we are expected to admire really lead such a carefree existence, without worries, without anxiety for the future? Certainly not. Let's look at the facts. It is said, for instance, that during Reagan's first term the number of unemployed dropped substantially and is continuing to decline. But this is a matter of manipulation of official statistics and not of any increase in the number of jobs offered on the labour market. According to the Department of Labour, there were 11.6 million unemployed at the beginning of 1984. Actually there were 5 million more than that. How come? The point is that those out of work for more than a year were no longer registered as unemployed and were listed as "discouraged workers." The omitted five million were regarded by the powers that be as idlers, undeserving of relief, food aid or charity of any kind.

ABC television devoted one of its "Good Morning, America!" programmes to the hundreds of thousands of Americans forced to sleep on the streets and in parks. A newsman who interviewed the President on this question was told that these people were homeless because they did not choose to have a home.

But after all, there are also figures that show that new jobs are being created. I read somewhere that two million new jobs had been created last year alone.

Yes, there is such a figure. But if you dig a little deeper you find that simultaneously with the opening of new jobs, old jobs are done away with. I made a detailed study of the situation in Michigan and Ohio, a part of the country long known as the "industrial heart of America." Today this is a region of hopelessness and neglect. The equivalent of a hundred of our Lorraines! In a southern suburb of Chicago I met a man named Scott Marshall, who had been the leader of the union local at a steel mill. He showed me what had happened to the mill and the neighbourhood around it. It looked as if it had been hit by war or a hurricane. Vast empty expanses of what had been parking lots. On a fence a piece of cardboard with the sign: "Sorry. No Jobs." The mill, and with it thousands of jobs, had died. Deserted streets, shuttered shops. A lonely monument to Columbus, and three little black boys at its foot.

I saw the same picture in Pittsburgh and Detroit. I recall this poignantly in connection with the jobs the workers there, and not only there, have lost forever. Workers who were once considered, and indeed were, the most highly paid in the world. When their children grew up they left home and started to earn money to build homes of their own. Now these children, grown-up and unemployed, have come back to the "old folks"—who are not yet old, still able to work, but without work. The two or three families living together barely manage to make ends meet, to pay for electricity and gas. They wait and hope, or despair.

Everything is calculated in America. You want assistance? You can go on "welfare" if you can prove that you do not own property worth more than $1,000. Bob Bonner of Clairton, Ohio, who once worked as a bricklayer for U.S. Steel and is now jobless but has not lost hope of finding work, told me: "I have a Ford. Not a new one, but valued at slightly more than $1,000. If I sold it and spent the money, I probably would get an aid grant so as not to die of hunger. But I can't sell it. If I did I would have nothing to go job hunting in, and there would be no hope of even finding odd jobs mending someone's staircase or garden fence."

Class Peace?

I have a question, Henri. I know that it is a difficult question, and is not often raised in connection with the situation in the most self-assured country of the West. Would you say that class peace, despite all the crying contradictions you have been speaking about, nevertheless still prevails there! Does the American socio-economic system possess some God-given elixir of eternal youth!

I asked myself this question again and again when I was in the United States. And, to put it briefly, I arrived at the conclusion—this of course is my own private opinion—that a new situation is developing in that country. A situation fundamentally different from what was before. The vast majority of the people I have spoken of and to whom I have devoted a great many pages in my book, are people—and there are millions of them—who have lost their jobs for good, or will lose them tomorrow, in the traditional branches of American industry. They have been denied the right to work.

Class peace, social harmony? Today these widely current formulas have a ring of sheer hypocrisy and mockery of those who with a deep sense of shame hold out their hands for a bowl of charity soup. They too once had comfortable homes and money to pay for a pleasant holiday and to give their children an education, they had cars, and many other of the good things of life. All the more tragic, then, is their present plight, and all the more humiliating their semi-starvation existence. The splinters of the shattered "American dream" cause deep and painful wounds. Formerly too it happened that a plant was closed down for three months or half a year because of the accumulation in its warehouses of goods which had to be sold before setting the conveyors going again. People periodically found themselves without work but they knew that production would be resumed and somehow they managed

A street scene in the land of equal opportunities.

to get along. The workers cursed and said: "This stupid administration doesn't know how to run things... And our boss isn't too competent either!" But it did not occur to them that it was the **System**, which they assumed to be the best in the world, that was to blame for their temporary hardships. They blindly believed that what was good for the firm, was good for the firm's workers. This was so much of an axiom that when General Motors, for instance, asked its work force voluntarily to accept a 15-per cent wage cut so as to help "their" company to put its affairs right, the workers agreed.

And now!

Now the certainty that it is the incompetence of the bosses and the officialdom, but by no means the **System** that is to blame for the troubles, is giving way to doubt, doubt to despair, and despair to anger. The legions of the "despairing" who do not receive unemployment benefits or food stamps are being joined by new contingents without hope, without a future. They have been robbed of their future by the **System** seeking to perpetuate its omnipotence. There is no one to appeal to, no one to look to for protection and compassion. No one to take to court. Because for one thing the firm you worked for has simply disappeared, it is now operating somewhere in Asia or Latin America, where labour is incomparably cheaper than in the United States. The **System** is mobile. The **System** knows where and on whose sweat it is more profitable to parasitize.

Believe me, I am not exaggerating or dramatizing things. In Pittsburgh I saw huge residential blocks which were falling into decay. To drive into the city where a great many highways converge we had to make a long detour because there were practically no bridges in a proper state of repair. And what of the human tragedies, of the ruins into which the **System** is reducing human beings...

But what about the trade unions? The powerful, rich U.S. unions!

This is something that interested me very much. I must say that the class collaborationism to which the leaders of the AFL-CIO are still dedicated no longer saves them from having to answer some difficult questions.

I had a long talk with President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and member of the AFL-CIO executive William W. Winpisinger. He told me that when asked in opinion polls what organization they respected most, Americans invariably put the unions last. In his opinion the unions themselves are to blame for this. Or rather the persistent image of business-unionism.

On the ideological plane, the leadership of the AFL-CIO echoes the official mythology which is inculcated in Americans from school age: "We are the land of free enterprise," "the land of equal opportunities for all," "the land of justice and equality." However, more and more workers are beginning to realize, Winpisinger said, that these slogans have no practical meaning in real life, but they do not yet know how to find a way out of the disastrous situation. Things would be different if the AFL-CIO leaders, instead of regarding themselves as an integral part of the establishment, fought to make the trade union movement an instrument of social change. As it is, they are convinced that the workers should participate in the defence of capitalism, that it is precisely this system that offers the working people the best chances... How in these circumstances could the trade unions retain the trust and respect of the workers?

Mind you, all this was said by a man in the know, a man with access to the highest spheres of American trade unionism and well familiar with the operations of the most powerful monopolies manufacturing super-modern technology, military technology included.

He told me quite plainly: "Nowadays in the United States it is the **System** that is blamed. And we are quite conscious of this. It is not a matter of how one or another economic mechanism works. The trouble lies with the **System.**"

Down with the Trade Unions!

Much that is new is happening in America today. A hitherto latent dialectic in which mutually exclusive phenomena and tendencies are intertwined has been, or — let us be cautious — is being set in motion. America is about to bring to perfection the artificial heart, which could prolong the life span of even the aged. And in the same America young people who cannot afford to pay for an appendectomy are allowed to die.

In 1984, only 16-17 per cent of the employed labour force were members of trade unions. This, too, is symptomatic. The employers do not want to deal even with the most pliable unions, and if one springs up, they as like as not simply close down the plant and move their operation to another state, or perhaps even to another continent.

Private organizations specializing in union busting are doing a thriving business. There already are about 1,000 of them in the U.S. They have at their disposal hundreds of millions of dollars, hire psychologists, sociologists, lawyers and experts at boring the working class from within, and insert advertisements in the press offering their services to employers and managers and boasting that no union has yet withstood their onslaught.

In Baden, Pennsylvania, a town located near Pittsburgh, I made the acquaintance of John Thompson, 24. He was employed by one of the Kroger foodshops to be found all over the United States. In Western Pennsylvania alone there were 65 of them. "Some time ago," Thompson told me, "the Kroger firm, finding its profit rate falling owing to growing unemployment and other indications of the impoverishment of its customers, decided to sell its shops to a local firm. But the employees were not informed of this. One day a management spokesman summoned the leaders of the union (it had a membership of some 3,000) and with a shamefaced air said: 'Gentlemen, we have to ask you to accept a wage cut. By 10 per cent. Otherwise we won't be able to hold out and will have to close shop.' We did not know that the move had been planned by one of those union-busting outfits. The union delegates said they would consult with the membership. After discussing the matter we went back to the boss and told him under the circumstances we agreed. The boss still looked uncomfortable, he scratched his head and finally came out with it: 'While you were consulting there we did some more figuring, thought it over and decided that 10 per cent wouldn't save the situation. It would have to be a 15 per cent cut.' That was too much! What would we have left to live on? We got the membership together again and decided not to make any more concessions. Strike!

"We struck for a day, a week, a month. But not a word from the bosses. We had pickets on duty outside the shops. One day a stranger approached them and asked what they were doing there. We're on strike, they said. The Krogers want to cut our wages. The Krogers aren't the owners any more, the man said. How is that? They've sold out to my firm. What's going to happen to us? You're out.

"Now," John wound up, "the new boss says he is ready to rehire us. But he's paying us not 10, or 15, but 50 per cent less!"

There is also another new angle to the by no means new labour-capital confrontation. Not so long ago most of the unemployed, the hungry, the poor, the homeless were blacks. That was taken for granted; it was the black man's lot to get along somehow without a job or to do the dirtiest, lowest-paid and most degrading work. Now from day to day more and more white Americans are finding themselves jobless. This is multiracial equality in lack of rights. There is no segregation among the redundant, the outcasts of scientific and technological progress which has

turned out to be a curse for all of them.

On the Brink of the Abyss

What about the new jobs!

They do not compensate for the loss of the old. If a skilled factory worker who has been laid off gets a job in a cafeteria, for instance, serving hot dogs, his wages will be one eighth to one tenth of what he earned before.

Life becomes a torment. There is a stampede for every new low-paid job going. The proprietors of eating places, for example, or, say, construction firms, do not consider themselves obliged to hire workers who have been laid off at factories. They prefer to take on "illegals" without asking whether their papers are in order—unemployed immigrant workers, mostly poor peasants or political refugees who had fled to the U.S. from some fascist dictatorship, like El Salvador, or Haiti.

These people have no rights and no citizenship, neither their own nor American. Now suppose one of them comes to a shop or, say, factory, construction site or eating joint looking for work. The boss says: OK, $3 a day. Or: just for your food. All he is concerned about are his profit and his tax returns. There is nothing to stop him from hiring 500 slaves and exploiting them to multiply his capital. If the slaves grumble and think about forming a union, the boss's reaction is immediate. He calls over the workers' leaders and tells them: listen, fellows, did you ever think of the immigration authorities? And if the workers insist, he will call up the police, as a rule just before pay day, and the undesirables will be taken care of by the guardians of the law. Human rights, you know....

Degradation, material and spiritual, poverty, a crippled public morality—even for me coming from France which is also a capitalist country, endowed too with many of the "joys" of the "society of equal opportunities"—all these things I found magnified a thousandfold in America. All this is borne out by statistics: 45-50 million people, one fifth of the U.S. population, are living below the poverty line. And the poverty line is an annual income of $10,000 for a family of four. Not so bad, you think? No, it is bad. A ride on the subway costs nearly a dollar, the rent for a tiny, rundown apartment is from $300 to $500 a month, and so on all along the line. A family of four, with an income of $10,000 a year does not get enough to eat, cannot afford medical care or to give the children an education.

Nowhere else to live.

The contrasts are endless. New Yorkers drink a lot of Coca Cola, and they drop the empty cans everywhere. The City Hall decided to end this and arranged for the empty cans to be turned in at five cents each. A regular hunt for empty cans began among the poor. In one supermarket I saw a very old woman haul a sackful of empty cans over to an automat set up for the purpose. It was quite a sight: the gleaming electronic device with its blinking lights and the wizened, blear-eyed old lady. The machine added up: 5 cents, 10 cents, 15 cents. Then, a bell rang, and it contemptuously spat out the next empty can—it didn't accept beer cans. The old lady dug into the dirty sack and another 5 cents went up on the register. And behind her there was a queue of other full-fledged citizens of the consumer society. Who will venture to deny that the future belongs to electronics?

George Kennan, onetime U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., once said he often asked himself what sense was there in defending oneself against imaginary external dangers when the signs of internal degradation were so glaringly evident.

Pragmatism

Is it really all hopeless, then!

No, Victor. I did see much that was negative in the U.S. and much that exceeded my worst expectations. But the positive aspects impressed me no less. There are in America many wonderful people, true enthusiasts. It takes much will power and great courage to fight for human dignity, equality and peace in the face of the drive for profit and the rampant all-powerful militarism, in a climate of abysmal political ignorance and deliberate manipulation of people's thinking, when you are incessantly told that "the Soviets are preparing for war against the United States... the Russians are apt to land at any moment." But fortunately, far from all Americans are simpletons. Asked in opinion polls whether they thought there could be winners and losers in a nuclear war, 80-83 per cent of the polled invariably said "No." Most are convinced that the Russians do not want war.

I would say that, despite the total deideologization, the obscurantism, and the atmosphere in which the Americans are subjected to indoctrination day in and day out for years and decades, their innate pragmatism gains the upper hand among broad sections of society.

Judging by everything, Ronald Reagan, though under strong pressure from the ultra-Right, has to take into account also the views of his pragmatic compatriots.

It was this that made him sit down at the negotiating table in Geneva. Now that a new dialogue has been initiated, the President will increasingly have to reckon with public opinion and the anti-war, anti-nuclear stand of many influential circles and organizations.

On Their Guard

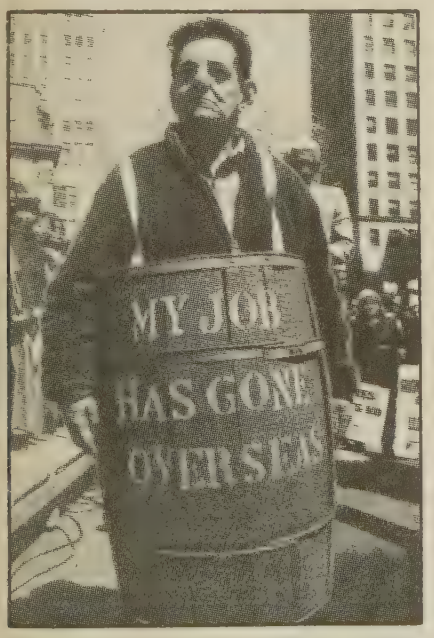
All this gives grounds for saying that present-day America is undergoing an evolution which cannot be regarded as exclusively negative. There is cause for new hope.

For optimism?

Yes. But we must not delude ourselves. If this evolution is analyzed dialectically it will be seen that there are alarming, if not sinister, symptoms. In particular, and primarily, symptoms of the rise of fascism. This fascism bears little resemblance to that which we experienced in Europe: it is not a resurgence of Hitler's swastika or Mussolini's fasces. In America, everything must be American.

Professor Bertram Gross, onetime adviser to President Roosevelt, calls it "friendly fascism" and convincingly shows that America is gradually being fascistized. This proceeds under cover of such watchwords as "national defence," "defence of freedom," "American ideals." Pseudopatriotism, insistent exhortations to defend and honour the flag, is a basic aspect of this ultra-reactionary demagogy.

I deal in my book with fascist-like groups, the racists and the Ku Klux Klan. But the main threat emanates not from them. Professor Gross holds that the biggest threat is presented not by the madmen who would instal in the U.S. national socialism of the purely Hitler variety. It is the alumni of exclusive universities connected with big



finance capital, with the military-industrial complex, that personify and cultivate the greatest of all dangers to American democracy. Progressive, democratic-minded Americans are alarmed by the fact that the extreme Right is from day to day becoming a more and more dynamic force influencing both home and foreign policy. In the years of the Reagan presidency all kinds of dubious "foundations," "political action committees" and "think tanks" have mushroomed.

Unquestionably, the most influential of these is the Heritage Foundation, founded in 1973 by the beer baron Joseph Coors. Prior to 1980 few had heard of this private outfit. Now it is known throughout America and is regarded as an unchallengeable authority in the ruling quarters. The Heritage Foundation has worked out a 3,000-page, 20-volume political programme called "Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration." Its main postulates are global hegemony of the U.S. ensured by military superiority over the U.S.S.R. and, within the country, revival of the notorious "internal security committees" of the times of Senator McCarthy. In the opinion of the Foundation, all this is necessary inasmuch as "individual liberties are secondary to the requirements of national security and the maintenance of order." It is financed by donations from 122,000 individuals and companies, among which are such pillars of imperialist capital as the Chase Manhattan Bank, Mellon Bank, Mobil Oil, and Gulf Oil.

In a word, the "mandate for leadership" is a code of rules for government based on openly totalitarian methods of resolving all social, economic and other problems.

Are many Americans aware of this danger?

Yes. And this is a positive symptom. Awareness of the possibility of an ultra-Right solution prompts many to adopt an active position in civic affairs. Former Senator James Fulbright, who takes a highly critical view of the present Administration, told me he was convinced that the common sense of "a pragmatic nation unencumbered by ideology" will prevail.

Robert J. Kalaski, editor of the paper published by the Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, told me: "I have no love for Communists. But I am not inclined to agree with those who say that we must stick our noses without delay into Nicaragua because the Communists there are a threat to us. I am not taken in by this. I simply believe that the guys in that country are fed up with living in poverty and being exploited by American Big Business."

In my book I cite many more such instances testifying to a definite sobering up in U.S. public thinking.

At a Crossroads

Don't you think, Henri, that these are only episodes, exceptions from the rule, mere ripples on a generally unruffled surface? That challenging the System does not shake it?

When I say that I saw signs of a new situation, I am by no means suggesting that the ripples, as you call them, are about to be followed by a storm. The fact is, however, that America is changing and will continue to change. The distress signal coming from millions of Americans whose lives have suffered shipwreck is a tocsin that is already drowning out the smug declarations of the ruling elite. The well-known U.S. economist Paul M. Sweezy sizes up the situation thus: "The calm is on the surface. Deep down diverse pressures and contradictions fraught with storms continue to exist and grow. There is no doubt that they will break to the surface in the historically not distant future."

The more insistent the propaganda of the American "model of salvation," the less people want to be "modelled" after the American pattern. The French working people, for instance, do not accept the American style of modernization, which brings in its train the rapid growth of unemployment and a sharp decline in living standards. They are not tempted by the American model in which social development is determined by the laws of "social Darvinism," with the strong surviving and prospering and the weak withering and dying. Yet this is the American way of life in which society is divided into the "winners" and the "losers"—those who win under all circumstances and those who are bound to lose.

What was your main impression of America?

I crossed the United States from Boston to Los Angeles, from Washington to San Francisco, from Birmingham to Chicago, and from Detroit to Dallas. I travelled with open eyes and an open mind. I saw everything about this vast country with a gigantic potential that charms and everything that horrifies. Most important of all, I saw and come to like the openhearted, friendly American people. Mostly I talked with ordinary Americans whom one rarely sees on TV screens, and it was primarily thinking of them that I wrote my book. Peace-loving and warmhearted, they refuse, despite the monstrous pressures they are subjected to, to believe that the merits of great countries must be measured by the number and yield of their nuclear warheads, or that it is the great predestination of America to be the world policeman in the service of the transnational corporations.

Justly proud of all the splendid things they have created by their labour, they are today filled with anxiety for themselves and for America. And we cannot remain indifferent to their anxiety. ■

Photos from Der Spiegel and Stern (F.R.G.) and Time (U.S.A.)

It is sixty years this February 16 since diplomatic relations were established between the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia

INSTRUCTIVE RETROSPECT

On a dark night in February 1926 a car left Jidda, still troubled by sporadic exchanges of fire in the aftermath of bitter fighting, and headed across the sites of recent battles towards the military camp of Abdel Aziz ibn Saud, the young and energetic ruler of the Nejd sultanate of Arabia. He had been proclaimed head of the first united state in the Arabian peninsula—King of Hijaz and Sultan of Nejd and its dependencies—just one month previously. (In September 1932, under a Royal Decree "On uniting parts of the Arab Kingdom," the state came to be known under its present name of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.)

The car was driven by Kerim Khakimov, the Soviet Union's diplomatic agent and consul general in Hijaz.

Royal Reception

Abdel Aziz gave a hearty welcome to the Moscow diplomat and invited him into the royal tent. Khakimov handed the king a note, which read: "On instructions from my government, I have the honour to inform Your Majesty that the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, following the principle of the self-determination of the peoples and having profound respect for the will of the Hijaz people, expressed in your being chosen king, recognizes Your Majesty as King of Hijaz and Sultan of Nejd and its dependencies. The Soviet government therefore considers itself in the state of normal diplomatic relations with Your Majesty's government."

The Soviet Union was the first country to recognize the independent Saudi state and establish diplomatic relations with it. That act of good will was very important to Abdel Aziz. Britain, which dominated Arabia at the time and viewed it as its domain, and other Western powers were in no hurry to recognize him as the head of a new state. The British put forward a number of conditions in the hope of retaining their privileges in the region but the Soviet Union's diplomatic move thwarted London's plans. Britain and the other powers had to follow the Soviet Union's example and recognize Saudi Arabia. But there was more to it.

Abdel Aziz brought under his hand a number of sultanates and tribes which had always been at loggerheads, with the British colonialists exploiting their rivalry to their own advantage. Now it was necessary to consolidate the newly formed state by creating its political and economic structures. Another urgent task was to overcome the appalling backwardness: suffice it to say that there were just two government-run schools, with tuition in Turkish, and two private ones in the whole of Central Arabia. Medieval stereotypes and fear of the new were inculcated in the minds of the population. In Al-Hawtah, for instance, the mob set fire to the first truck they saw simply because mechanical vehicles were considered "the work of the devil."

Britain, seeking to retain its positions, was trying to incite hostility to the King's policy of centralization among the tribes and the high clergy. London also incited the rulers of neighbouring sultanates and states against him.

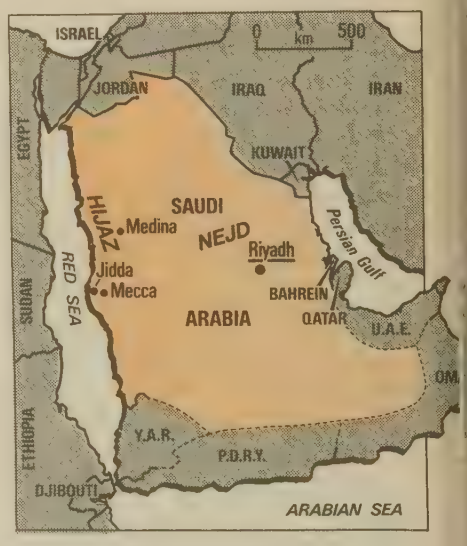
In these circumstances the establishment of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. and the subsequent development of contacts in different fields helped the emergent state to repulse attacks and strengthen its positions in the Arab world.

Soviet-Saudi political contacts continued to grow along with mutual understanding, trust and desire to learn more about each other. In a letter to Georgi Chicherin, the Soviet Union's People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, King Abdel Aziz expressed his "profound satisfaction with the fact that relations between the two governments are developing in a friendly manner." The level of bilateral relations was soon raised: on January 1, 1930, the diplomatic agency and consulate general of the U.S.S.R. in Jidda were transformed into a diplomatic mission.

Fruitful Dialogue

Crown Prince Faisal, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs and subsequently king of Saudi Arabia, paid a visit to the Soviet Union in May-June 1932.

Sending his son to Moscow, King Abdel Aziz wrote in a message to Mikhail Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.: "Ardently seeking to enhance the wonderful sentiments of friendship and affection between your country and my



country... I introduce to you our son and governor of Hijaz, Emir Faisal, who will convey to you my gratitude and my satisfaction with the good deeds of your government. I hope that this will help strengthen the firm foundations of friendship and affection. Please accept my greetings and respect."

The visit became a landmark in the history of Soviet-Saudi relations. Delivering a speech at a luncheon in honour of the Saudi delegation, Mikhail Kalinin said, in particular: "It gives me all the more pleasure to welcome you in the capital of the Soviet Union since you represent the government of an Arab people who since the world war have been able, thanks to

the courageous and farsighted policy of its leaders, to win and consolidate the full independence which is essential to the economic and cultural development of the country."

The political dialogue between the two countries was backed by the development of commercial links. The Vostokintorg office chartered Soviet ships to deliver basic commodities to Saudi Arabia, including flour, sugar, kerosene (as Saudi Arabia's huge oil reserves had not yet been discovered), and also fabrics and household goods. Saudi merchants were happy to see Soviet-made goods selling fast and street pedlars advertised bread by saying that it was baked with Moscow flour.

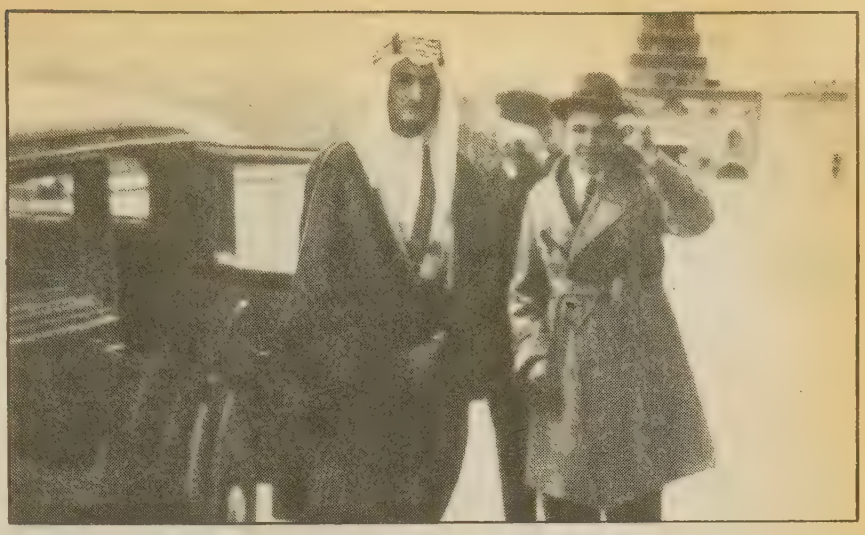
The first Soviet steamer berthed at Jidda in October 1927 and regular shipping between Odessa and Jidda began. In addition to shipping goods, Soviet steamers carried pilgrims to Mecca from the Soviet Union and other countries during Hadj.

Old-timers in Jidda probably remember Soviet physicians who worked at the outpatient clinic at the Soviet consulate general. Their services were available to locals as well and their considerate attitude to patients, efficiency and tact made them popular among Saudis from all walks of life.

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations, religious contacts increased. A delegation of Moslems from Russia and Turkestan attended at the king's invitation the first Moslem congress in Mecca in 1926. The Soviet delegation contributed substantially to the congress's official recognition of Saudi Arabia's special role in the Moslem world as the guardian of the Islamic shrines, which was very important to King Abdel Aziz both politically and economically.

The British were worried by the development of diverse contacts between the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia. The British press began to publish slanderous allegations about the goals of Soviet policy in Arabia in a bid to smear the activities of Soviet officials. British agents supplied Saudi leaders with "evidence" of the spread of "communist propaganda" by Soviet diplomats and of their efforts "to undermine the foundations of Islam." Deception, falsehood, blackmail and threats were all brought into play. Direct political and economic pressure was exerted on the Saudis in order to make them sever their relations with the U.S.S.R.

In 1983, on the eve of the second world war, the Soviet Union reduced the number of its diplomatic missions abroad and Soviet diplomats were recalled from Jidda. Bilateral contacts have made little progress since that time.



Crown Prince Faisal in the Kremlin on his way to Mikhail Kalinin's office.

A still from a 1932 newsreel

Lessons for Today

But very important steps, especially for that period, had been taken during the 1930s. Before the second world war, Saudi Arabia and Yemen (as from 1928) were the only Arab countries to have diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. In fact, the foundations of the Soviet Union's present-day firm and diversified relations of friendship with the Arab world were laid during that period.

Today Soviet-Arab relations are an important factor in world politics helping to strengthen the Arabs' positions in the struggle for their legitimate rights.

The Arabs have had the opportunity on more than one occasion to see that the Soviet Union has always rejected the imperial mentality and advocated the sovereign right of every people to choose its own path of political, economic and social development, as well as its friends and allies. The U.S.S.R. does not crave for the natural resources of Arab countries, does not seek military bases in their territories and does not try to impose fettering deals on them. "The Soviet Union plays an especially important role in the Middle East," Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal has said in an interview to the weekly Al-Moustakbal. "Saudi Arabia thinks highly of the Soviet stand on the Palestinian problem and on the Arab-Israeli conflict, as the Saudi leaders, including King Fahd, have pointed out on more than one occasion. We also remember that the Arabs used Soviet-made weapons to defend themselves and repulse Israeli aggression."

In August 1985 Prince Faisal ibn Fahd, president of the Youth Welfare committee of Saudi Arabia, paid a visit to the Soviet Union. Talking to a correspondent of the Kuwait news agency (KUNA), he characterized his meetings and conversations in Moscow as "exceptionally good and cordial."

The Persian Gulf countries are displaying more and more interest in the Soviet Union. They appreciate its peaceful foreign policy and its prestige in international affairs and seek to establish contacts with it. The absence of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. is a "diplomatic anomaly," the newspaper Gulf News, published in the United Arab Emirates, said, pointing out that the Soviet Union is a great power which firmly supports the Arabs. Accord was reached in September 1985 on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Oman and later an agreement was signed on the exchange of diplomatic missions at embassy level between the Soviet Union and the United Arab Emirates. These steps are quite logical today stemming as they do from international developments and the national interests of the Arab countries.

The record of Soviet-Saudi relations has been most useful and instructive.

M. PETROV

JOSE DA SILVA'S ELDORADO

VITALY SOBOLEV

Fate threw together José da Silva, a Brazilian shepherd, and a powerful transnational monopoly, the Anglo-American Corporation, at what was a turning point in the development of Brazil's gold-mining industry, an industry of no small importance to the country, especially in the light of the financial difficulties caused by its $105 billion foreign debt, the highest in the developing world. This is how the tale of the shepherd and the TNC began.

While washing his six-month-old daughter in a stream one day in September 1979, da Silva happened upon a gold nugget the size of a hen's egg. The lucky find was made in the south-east of Para State, near the city of Maraba, where the Tocantins, the Amazon's right tributary, and the trans-Amazonian highway meet. José and a host of other landless peasants had moved there from Brazil's poverty-stricken northeast in the seventies when the highway was under construction.

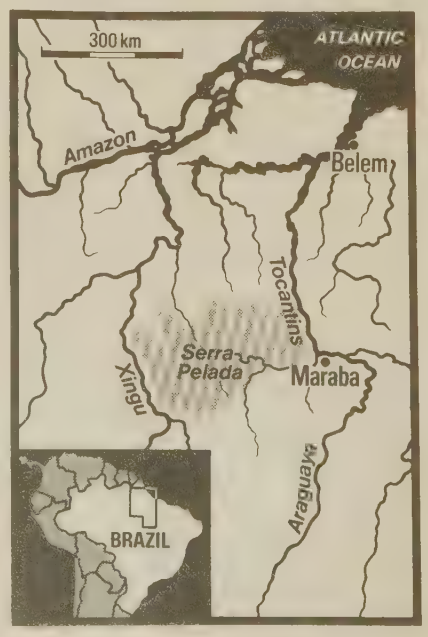
In place of the burnt-out selva there emerged enormous estates owned by José's wealthy compatriots and foreigners who had bought local land for a song and turned it into pastures for their countless herds to graze on.

After José had stumbled on the nugget, he didn't tend to cattle any longer. The nugget brought to life the new world-famous Serra Pelada (Bald Mountains) gold field, the largest gold-mining area developed by individual prospectors. Its output is several times the country's previous total. Feverish quests for the precious metal began along the length of the Amazon River and promptly brought brilliant results. In a short while the geological map of the Amazon basin became strewn with "Au" signs.

At the beginning of the current decade gold production began to accelerate in Brazil. Until as late as 1980 Brazil had mined a little over four tons of gold a year—too little to meet the needs of even its own jewellers, dentists and manufacturers of electronic equipment. Brazil had been compelled to buy nearly a ton of gold a year from South Africa which produced 700 tons a year (nearly three quarters of the capitalist world's gold output). The Anglo-American Corporation is the biggest gold producer in the racist state. It had opened a branch in Brazil—just in case. The branch hadn't played much of a role in the corporation's affairs until José da Silva found his nugget, whereupon the situation changed. By 1983 Brazil's gold output had grown tenfold. Towards the end of the century it will amount to an estimated 200 tons a year, at least, while South Africa, whose gold resources are running low, will probably have to content itself with half its present yield.

Anglo-American was quick to take advantage of the new situation and attach itself to the flow of Brazilian gold. The company managers probably felt the same way as José did when, with his baby daughter and the nugget clutched to his breast, he rushed into his mud hut and shouted: "Wife, we are rich!"

Da Silva's was not the first sensational find in the history of Brazilian gold mining. Another pauper had created as great a stir at the end of the 17th century. Prior to that, its Portuguese discoverers had had to wait for two centuries for Brazil to live up to their hopes of finding gold. It had been all the more disappointing to them as in the neighbouring Spanish possessions things were going enviably well. The Spaniards were taking shiploads of treasures out of South America—first those accumulated by the Incas and the Aztecs, and later what the indigenes' enslaved descendants extracted from the seemingly inexhaustible gold mines. As for Brazil, it yielded only wood (even though of valuable kinds) and all sorts of farm products. Then an obscure mulatto who was making his way across what was then a tract of wilderness and later came to be known as Minas Gerais (Main Mines) State stopped by the Tripui brook to quench his thirst one day—and spotted heavy queer-looking black stones on the bottom. Those were small gold nuggets coated with iron oxide. The find was followed by more. In the 100 years that followed Portugal took more gold out of Brazil than Spain had had from its colonies over two centuries. In the 18th century Brazil's gold output amounted to more than a half of the world's.

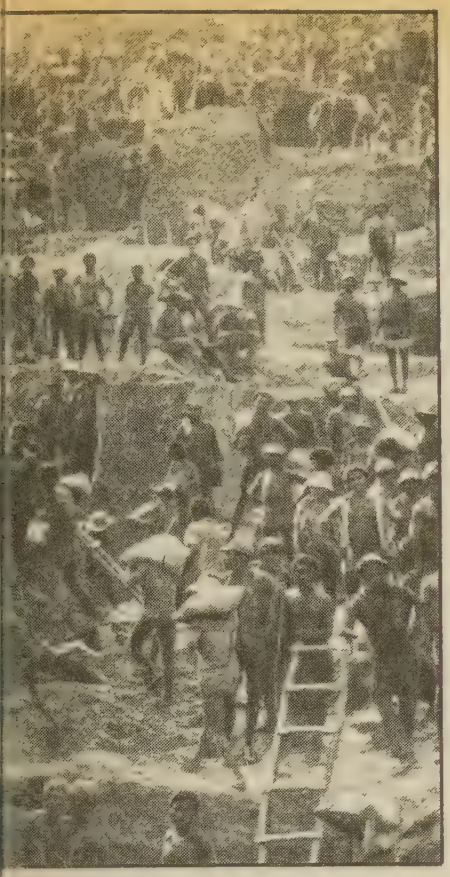


That did not make the local people any happier, however. Bulky red bags sealed with Lusitanian crosses were taken away to Europe on heavily armed ships, with Brazilians looking after them gloomily. The expression "to look at the ships," meaning to be duped, probably goes back to those times. By the time the country got its independence in the early 19th century, one had to dig deeper and deeper to get at whatever gold was left.

Towards the middle of this century, about 400 gold mines in Minas Gerais State were abandoned, flooded and overgrown with bushes. Few were still productive. The biggest of them, Morro Velho (Old Hill), was taken over from its previous Brazilian owner by Anglo-American.

Morro Velho's 4,000-odd miners drilled and blasted gold-bearing quartz two and more kilometres down, at temperatures of over 60°C. Ventilation equipment installed in 1920 wasn't of much use to them at that depth.

Brazilian finance was also increasingly "short of breath." It is hard to tell how much currency Anglo-American held back from the Brazilian treasury. But one thing is clear: this transnational monopoly, along with others, is largely responsible for the rapid growth of Brazil's foreign debt. There is no doubt that the monopoly had



Eighty thousand gold diggers trying their luck at Serra Pelada. Photo from Stern (F.R.G.)

found out in advance what Juvenil Felix, the director of its Brazilian branch, boastfully announced following José da Silva's discovery: "There is still a lot of gold here, in the Old Hill." It was only in the eighties, however, that the company allocated a lump sum to be used in bringing the mine back into operation as it plunged into a new gold rush. It had to compete with other foreign monopolies which had learned about the Brazilian finds, such as America's General Mining, which had already struck it rich in South Africa, and British Petroleum, which had decided to diversify out into gold mining. These financial giants are competing chiefly over the Araci deposit in Bahia State, hit on by chance when drilling for copper and zinc. The size of the Araci gold deposit is estimated at no less than 45 tons.

Brazilian national capital is powerless against its mightier foreign rivals. Some local businessmen have been lucky: transnational concerns have enlisted their cooperation as junior partners, for all sorts of formalities are easier to handle using Brazilian company names as a front. General Mining, for instance, operates under the name of Metropolitano. As for most well-to-do Brazilians who worship the golden calf, some of them speculate on fluctuations in the gold market (the latest prices per troy ounce are announced in the City of London office of the Rothschild and Sons bank by the top five gold traders every morning); and others take the bread out of small-time gold diggers' mouths by panning gold-bearing gravel from alluvial deposits.

True, they are not the only ones to do this. Monteiro Aranha, a company that fronts for British Petroleum, does not disdain the pan either. These powerful competitors—domestic and foreign alike—usually appropriate the finds made by individual prospectors. Demands that individual gold digging at Serra Pelada be stopped have been repeatedly made over the past few years. The last deferment granted to the gold diggers expires this year whereupon gold mining will be industrialized.

Today gold diggers are responsible for two thirds of Brazil's gold output. Hundreds of thousands of them try their luck panning gravel and sand in Amazonia. Eighty thousand of them work at Serra Pelada, pecking on the precipitous sides of the veritable craters they have dug there. Each site is barely large enough for its owner to stretch out on, either lengthwise or crosswise. Having scraped up some purple or reddish dirt with a mattock, a gold digger climbs down shaky fragile ladders, and picks his way along flimsy planks thrown over deep pools to pan the dirt and climb back up to his site for more. Sometimes an undermined slope collapses on the diggers' heads to cure them of the gold rush forever. And sometimes they meet their doom in the nearby town of Maraba, where the luckier gold diggers go to trade their dearly bought "treasure" for a few hours of drunken merrymaking: at least one murder a day is committed within the town limits.

Initially, after José da Silva made his discovery, Serra Pelada was governed by the law of the jungle. José proved neither strong nor vigorous enough to hold onto the claims he had staked. He lost no less than a dozen of them—his best—one by one. Later, Major Moura (nicknamed Major Curio after a local song-bird) led about fifty SNI* secret service agents to Serra Pelada and established a truly curious order of things there. Major Curio's personality merits special attention. He made his first appearance in the neighbourhood of Maraba as an SNI officer in 1972, bringing 10,000 troops along, his orders being to suppress the attempted guerrilla action by the regime's opponents. It took him three years to do so. Later, Major Curio—who had by then won another nickname, the Emperor of Serra Pelada—was elected to the National Congress, with most of the votes in his favour cast in Serra Pelada.

In Serra Pelada, justice is administered, verdicts with no right of appeal are passed, gold mining sites are apportioned and trade licences issued by two persons: Georges de Almeida, a geologist representing the National Mining Department, and Bonifacio da Silva, chairman of the gold diggers' cooperative, a former SNI agent described by Brazilian journalists as Major Curio's man. Those summarily condemned by the "Solomonic tribunal," as the gold diggers call it, are first pilloried, with their heads half-shaven (probably to intimidate others), then driven to the trans-Amazonian highway in a police van and left to their own resources.

Nevertheless, fortune did smile on some of the hopefuls in Serra Pelada. Nuggets weighing over seven kilos were found there on many occasions. A correspondent for the reputable magazine Veja reported that one of the gold diggers, a certain Marlon Piddi, had found enough gold—almost two tons—to buy numerous estates and a wholesale trading company. This explains the mass influx of fortune hunters to Serra Pelada—but is cold comfort to them as they pan heaps of squeezed-out earth without much success.

José da Silva never got rich. His family still huddles in a hut near Maraba. His wife and children go barefoot. Once in, his luck is now out, as is that of many other Brazilians, whose hopes were stolen by the vampires of transnational corporations like Anglo-American, sucking Brazil's fabulous mineral wealth.

In response to the Brazilian public's demands, however, the José Sarney civilian government now in office is promising to bring the exploitation of this wealth under its control. The new authorities encourage the flow of individual prospectors and national capital into Amazonia and its development in the country's interests. At the same time the new government stresses that support for private enterprise is not to be confused with patronizing economic and financial groups, monopolies and latifundists. ■

* SNI—National Information Service, established after the 1964 military coup.

MORE ABOUT THE MURDER ON SHERIDAN CIRCLE

TAYLOR BRANCH and EUGENE M. PROPPER

Orlando and Isabel Letelier check into New York's Algonquin Hotel at three o'clock that afternoon. Friends arrive to greet them. Letelier says he is pleased with the posters he has seen advertising that night's rally on the third anniversary of the military coup in Chile.

At the meeting Letelier says: "Today Pinochet has signed a decree in which it is said that I am deprived of my nationality. This is an important day for me—a dramatic day in my life in which the action of the fascist generals against me makes me feel more Chilean than ever... I was born a Chilean; I am a Chilean; and I will die a Chilean. They were born traitors; they live as traitors; and they will be known forever as fascist traitors!"

"We Have Things to Do"

Sitting on the bed in his room at the Château Renaissance motel, Townley takes a breath and plunges directly into business. "I am asking you to eliminate this man as a threat to Chile," he says. "My orders are to seek your assistance and to leave the country once you have accepted the mission. The service has already taken care of the preoperational intelligence. We know his habits. We know where he lives and how he drives to work. He parks his car in a dark alley. I believe it would be easy to get him there and leave him like the victim of a mugging. Perhaps you could approach him in a different way. The point is that it must be done—and as soon as possible."

"What's he doing now?" asks Alvin Ross, who is sitting off to the side.

"As I understand it, he is trying to set up a government in exile," Townley replies.

The meeting ends on a command from Novo. "We will let you know of our decision," he tells Townley. He shakes hands and leads a procession out the door.

Townley has trouble sleeping. Paz calls early the next morning. "I will pick you up soon," he says. "We have things to do."

Townley dresses hurriedly. He takes Paz's message as a sign that the Cubans* have agreed, but he knows better than to ask Paz during the drive to the automobile dealership where Novo works. This is news he should hear directly from the leader himself. Paz keeps giving it away with his bubbly mood, however.

Novo walks across the street from his office and jumps into the back seat of Paz's car. He looks around vigilantly for spies while maintaining the air of a businessman. "Okay, we'll do it," he tells Townley. "But we have a condition."

"What's that?" asks Townley.

"You have to participate," says Novo. "You have to go down to Washington yourself. We want a signal that this will be a more equal partnership. Virgilio will be working with you. But it will have to wait a few days, because we have something else going. Let me know if there are any problems." Novo gets out of the car and walks briskly away.

It is a warm day, but Townley feels frost in his lungs. The first thing he says when Paz drives away is, "Okay, Virgil, if I have to go down there, it's got to be a bomb."

"Why is that?" says Paz.

"Because that way I can help you follow him and help you build the device," says Townley, "but I can still follow my orders not to be there when you set it off."

Paz shrugs as though it is a matter of indifference to him.

Over the next few days, Townley tests the beeper equipment in Paz's apartment. The CNM* has plans for another operation: a bomb attack on the Russian freighter Ivan Shepetkov, which is moored at Port Elizabeth. Townley calls Santiago to report Novo's demand to Major Christoph Willeke, the DINA officer in charge of foreign operations. On the second call, Willeke conveys DINA's approval of the change in plans. "What will be, will be," he says. Townley thus learns that it is more important to eliminate Letelier than it is for him to stay out of Washington.

Now his plan is to go to Washington and to leave again as quickly as possible. For security reasons, he does not want to go as a Chilean—especially as an official Chilean. He does not

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Concluded from our previous issue.

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* Cuban counterrevolutionary emigrants.

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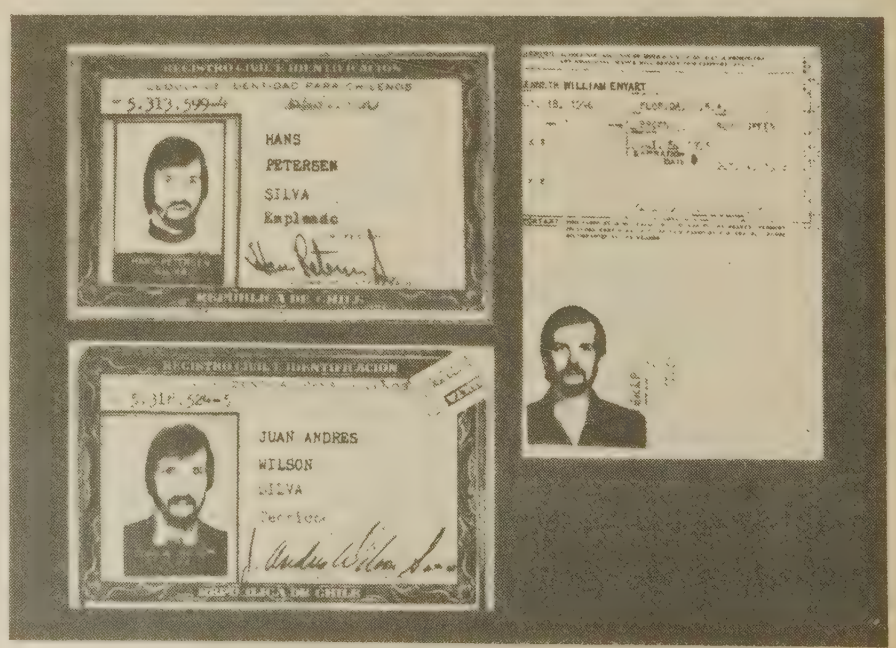
* The subversive émigré Cuban Nationalist Movement.

False identity cards for Michael Townley made out in the names of Hans Petersen, Andres Wilson, and Kenneth Enyart.



want to go as Hans Petersen. So Townley calls his wife and tells her to send his Kenneth Enyart identity papers to New York by way of a LAN Chile pilot.

The following Tuesday, September 14, Townley drives to Kennedy Airport and picks up the Enyart papers from Cruchaga. He leaves the Petersen papers there for safekeeping. Then he turns in his rented car, rents another in the name of Enyart, and checks into a different New Jersey motel, the Liberty Motor Inn.

At midnight on the fifteenth—just after a bomb blows out part of the Ivan Shepetkov's hull—Townley joins Paz for the long drive to Washington in Paz's car. They have placed the bomb materials in the trunk. Paz has a pistol strapped inside his shirt. During the early part of the trip, Paz keeps the radio tuned to an all-news station in New York. He shouts in triumph when he hears a bulletin on the damage to the Shepetkov. Townley joins in the celebration.

They reach Washington before sunrise. Townley says that he has drunk too much coffee to sleep. So he and Paz take out Fernandez's map and begin looking for Letelier's house. It takes them nearly two hours to find it.

Letelier lives on a quiet dead-end street. Townley and Paz decide that they cannot initiate their surveillance in that area. It is too quiet. They would stand out too much during the wait. Townley verifies the licence numbers of the two Letelier cars as Paz swings by the house again. "Fernandez said they keep the cars out of the garage," says Townley. "That's good."

Using Fernandez's map, Townley directs Paz along Letelier's route to work. Shortly after turning onto River Road, they pull into the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant. "We can pick him up here," says Townley.

It is half past eight in the morning. Paz rushes into the restaurant for more coffee and some food, while Townley keeps an eye on the traffic feeding into River Road from the direction of Letelier's house. Neither man says very much after Paz returns. They are working.

Shortly after nine o'clock Townley says, "That's him."

They watch the blue Chevelle go by. The driver is alone. "That's his licence number. Let's go." Paz pulls into the traffic.

They follow Letelier into the city. It is about a twenty-minute drive from Letelier's house to the embassy district near which his office is located. Along the route they pass a wooded park. "This would be a good place," says Townley. "Try to pass him."

Paz finds it impossible to pass Letelier in the traffic. They lose Letelier when he makes a left turn onto Q. Street. Paz misses the turn and curses the fact that the next street is one-way to the right. They do not see the Chevelle again until they drive slowly past the Institute for Policy Studies. Letelier's car is parked in the alley, just as Fernandez said it would be.

Letelier flies back to Washington from a one-day trip to New York on Saturday, September 18. It is Chilean Independence Day. For the third year since the coup, Chilean exiles observe a day of mourning and political dedication on the eleventh, followed by the traditional day of celebration a week later.

Pinochet and his junta pedantically implemented their plans for the physical extermination of prominent Popular Unity figures. Soon after the coup José Toha Gonzalez (left), who like Orlando Letelier had been Minister of National Defence in the Allende government, was murdered in the army hospital to which he had been brought from the concentration camp on the Dawson Island. General Carlos Prats, former commander of ground forces and former Minister of the Interior and Defence, was killed in Buenos Aires in September 1974 when his car was blown up.

TASS photos

"Let's Put It On Now..."

Dionisio Suarez arrived that Saturday morning with the last necessary component of the bomb, a military blasting cap.

Since breakfast, the three men have spent the day going over the path of the car again for the benefit of Suarez, and they have bought a few extra items at a downtown Radio Shack. Townley needs a soldering kit and a drill for the work he plans.

After supper, Suarez stops briefly at his motel room and then walks across six lanes of busy traffic in the dingy, industrial part of Washington and knocks at the room of Paz and Townley. Paz pulls him through the door and bolts it from the inside. Townley has his tools and the bomb materials spread out on the dresser. He has bought three ordinary rectangular cake tins for the TNT. He spends the next two hours putting the bomb together.

It is eleven that night by the time Townley finishes washing his hands and cleaning up. Then he sits down and places calls to the bus terminal and the train station. He wants to leave for New York immediately, so that he can be out of town when Paz and Suarez complete the job. But he discovers that all ground transportation is shut down for the night. So are the airlines. He is stuck until morning.

"I'm not sleepy," says Suarez. "I think we should go put it on now so we won't have to sit here with it. Are you going to come with us, Andrés? As long as you are stuck here, anyway?"

"I'll go with you," Townley says. "I haven't got anything else to do."

They lock the transmitter, encoder, and antenna in the trunk of Suarez's car, and Townley puts the bomb in the trunk of Paz's Volvo.

"I'm driving," Paz says jovially. "Who wants to sit in the back seat?"

"I will," Townley volunteers. "That thing's not going off."

On the long drive to Letelier's neighbourhood, they talk of little else besides the bomb. It has taken over their minds.

As Townley is explaining the equipment he has brought along for Paz and Suarez to use when they attach the bomb to the car. Paz turns to him and says: "Don't bother with that."

Townley stops talking. He knows something is wrong.

"We want you to put the bomb on, my friend," Paz says evenly. "Our movement wants the hand of Chile very close to this act. You put it on. We will set it off. That seems like a fair partnership to us."

No one says anything for the next several minutes. Townley feels that he has been outmanoeuvred.

Paz is soon driving the Volvo slowly down Ogden Court, Letelier's street.

"There's the car," says Suarez. He notes that the lights are off inside the house.

Townley tucks the bomb under the

front of his sweat shirt. It is cold against his belly. He taps Paz on the shoulder. "Go on around the block again and meet me at the top of the hill," he says....

Townley walks down the left side of the street towards the house. He sees no one as he passes it, nor when he quick-steps into the driveway under the night shadow of a tree.

Townley drops to the ground beside the driver's door of the Chevelle, where he realizes to his relief that he is covered on nearly every side by the car, the tree, and the darkness. He puts the bomb on the ground and rests for a few seconds, but his breath is still short when he goes to work. He takes out a pencil-size flashlight and lies on his back—parallel to the car. Then he tries to slide his left shoulder under the car.

Townley groans when he discovers that he has less than three inches of clearance for his shoulder. There is no way that he can reach both hands under the car at once. Townley suppresses panic. He flips the flashlight into the "on" position and holds it under the car with his left hand. As he cranes his neck to see the cross-beam underneath, he lets some of the light slip between his fingers. This allows him to see where the bomb should go.

Then he hears a car. Townley tries to freeze, but his chest keeps heaving. He almost runs when he sees that it is a police car, but inertia and indecision pin him to the ground. He hears the police car circling quietly at the bottom of the hill, and then, just as quietly, it passes by him again on the way out of Ogden Court. Just a routine patrol, he hopes, but it takes a few seconds for his nerves to calm down so that he can resume work. Now, taping feverishly, he worries that the perspiration from his hands and wrists will foul the tape.

Now there is only one thing left: the safety switch. He takes a deep breath, reaches under the tape with his fingers, and flips the switch.

Within a few seconds he is walking wide-eyed up the street. He jumps into the car and suddenly becomes incandescent with energy. His part is over.

"The Artifact Is in Place"

Back in the motel, Paz falls asleep instantly, but Townley keeps thinking. At dawn, he walks to a pay phone on New York Avenue and places a collect call to his wife. "Call Gutierrez," * he says. "And tell him that the artifact is in place. And that it is operational."

Suarez drives him to the airport in time to catch the earliest morning flight to Newark. That same night Townley flies to Miami, where his parents live.

After dinner on the night of September 20, Michael Moffitt and Orlando Letelier retire into the den of Letelier's house to work on a paper they have been writing for publication under Letelier's name. Both are trained economists. Recently they have published a magazine article declaring that Pinochet's economic policies have brought ruin to the vast majority of Chile's population, and that such policies can be inflicted only by repression and military force.

In the living room, Ronni Moffitt talks with Isabel Letelier. The younger woman is intensely curious about all things Chilean.

The Moffitts' car has not been working that day, and Letelier offers them the loan of his Chevelle: they can take it home with them and return the next morning.

They return shortly before nine o'clock on Tuesday. Letelier runs downstairs, tying his tie. He kisses Isabel, promises to call her later in the day, and is off. To her, the morning is completely normal.

* * *

"That's about it," Townley said.

"No, it's not," said Propper. "Who pushed the button? We still don't know that."

"Well, there were two buttons, actually," said Townley. "You had to push them in the right combination at the same time."

"But who pushed them, then?" asked Propper.

"I am not sure myself," said Townley. "I assume it was Suarez, because I was worried on the morning it happened. And I called Paz's house in New Jersey from my parents' house. Virgil answered, which surprised me. He was real gruff, like I'd just waked him up. And he hung up on me. So I guess he couldn't have done it if he was in New Jersey. That leaves Suarez. And I guess you realize, of course, that the guy who probably pushed the buttons is the same guy you let go about four or five days before you got me up here," Townley said wryly....

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* The pseudonym "Gutierrez" was always reserved in DINA for the officer in charge of foreign operations. In this instance, "Gutierrez" was Major Christoph Willeke.

WE SUM UP

WHO WAS BEHIND THE ASSASSINS

The trial of Letelier's killers began on January 9, 1979, thirty months after the crime on Sheridan Circle.

Letelier was assassinated on the personal orders of Pinochet and Colonel Contreras, chief of the secret police (DINA). The killers were Michael Townley and a group of Cuban gusanos, old hands at terrorist acts. The killing of the prominent Chilean democrat, however, was more than just the elimination of another political opponent by the fascist junta. It was a CIA plot with far-reaching objectives. This is the conclusion that suggests itself as one reads "Labyrinth" by Taylor Branch and Eugene Propper, and compares the facts it cites. The authors are, however, chary of formulating a definite conclusion.

Since the book appeared in 1982 many sources have confirmed the CIA's complicity in Letelier's murder. Last year Ralph McGehee published a book entitled "Deadly Deceits, My 25 Years in the CIA," which contains more than a hint that Letelier was the victim of a top-secret CIA operation concerned with eliminating foreign political leaders who were not to the United States' liking.

Shortly after the start of the inquiry, Assistant U.S. Attorney of the District of Columbia, Eugene Propper, wrote in his notebook: "Hostile forces ... figured to be on the other side. Spy agencies seemed everywhere."

Indeed, the inquiry marked time for almost two years and it looked as if it was likely to be suspended for lack of evidence. Things seemed to be set on an all too familiar course. Everyone knew who benefited from the crime but there was no incriminating evidence. It was a neat job, as had been the assassinations of Congo's national hero Patrice Lumumba, the Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos, the President of Equador Jaime Roldos, the former Bolivian President Juan José Torres and others. And yet Propper managed to establish that one of the killers was a man referred to in the documents as "the blond Chilean" (he was fair-haired, tall, quite un-Chilean in appearance). Propper identified him as American-born Michael Townley who lived in Chile where his father was a representative for the Ford motor company. Townley's field was considered to be

radioelectronics, but in his circle he was better known as an expert on explosive devices.

The first cover for Townley's work for the CIA in Chile was the Peace Corps. In 1968 the Left-wing press in Chile exposed him as a CIA agent and published his photograph. After the Popular Unity government came to power, Townley assembled bands of thugs from the fascist organization Country and Liberty and engaged in sabotage. During an attempt to blow up a television tower in Concepcion he shot dead a guard and had to fly from Chile. He settled in Miami, U.S.A., and, acting on instructions from his masters at Langley, established contacts with Cuban émigrés.

After the Allende government was toppled, "the blond Chilean" was again attached to DINA. Officially working under Contreras, Townley was first and foremost a CIA agent.

Colonel Contreras, who was also well in with the CIA, was fully aware of the nature of Townley's mission in Washington. He might have remained silent about this had circumstances not forced him to speak. The wide publicity Propper's findings had received made U.S. judicial authorities summon Contreras to Washington. Contreras was quick to realize that they were ready to sacrifice him as a pawn. He sought a meeting with the CIA resident in Santiago, but the resident avoided him. The colonel then announced through his lawyer that if harassment continued he would publish some intriguing information implicating the CIA and the U.S. government. After that Contreras was left alone and Pinochet, who had promoted him to general, retired him on the quiet shortly afterwards.

Townley was more forthcoming. However, he too remained silent about his links with the CIA. Eventually, though, he let the cat out of the bag. Wishing to protect his superiors from the Chilean secret police and thus ensure a generous allowance to his family in Santiago, he threatened to disclose the account numbers and names in which he and Contreras drew their pay from the CIA in U.S. banks. The threat could not have been unnoticed by those on whom his fate depended.

But the main piece of evidence confirming CIA involvement in the crime on Sheridan Circle needs to be described in greater detail, because it shows that the decision to liquidate Letelier had been taken at a very high level at Langley. This was a most important lead and it enabled Propper to make progress when it had begun to seem that his efforts were in vain.

In April 1976 Conrado Pappalardo, chief of protocol at the Paraguayan Foreign Office, called on the U.S. ambassador George Landau and asked him to do him a favour and issue American visas to Chilean secret service agents Juan Williams Rosé (alias Townley) and Alejandro Romeral Jara (alias Captain Fernandez) who were to carry out a delicate mission in Washington. Pappalardo confided that it was not just a personal request from Pinochet to his Paraguayan "colleague" Stroessner. The question had been cleared with General Vernon Walters, CIA deputy director, during his recent visit to Asuncion.

Landau was an experienced diplomat. He was not satisfied with oral reference to Walters and decided to withhold visas until he had received a reply to his coded enquiry to the general. The answer was not forthcoming. Pappalardo called again and pressed the ambassador stressing that Walters was expecting the agents in Washington and that they had to report to him personally on arrival. But Landau was still unwilling to issue visas pending a reply from the Number Two man in the CIA. Meanwhile, to be on the safe side, he ordered photocopies of passports and sent them to the State Department. At long last the answer came. As might have been expected, Walters wrote that he did not know and did not want to know anything about the affair. Apparently the general was extremely displeased that a Stroessner official had by his ineptitude put him in a very awkward position by twice mentioning his name to ambassador Landau, whom the CIA considered to be a liberal.

The ambassador never issued the visas. He was mindful of the fact that the CIA had been under fire in the U.S. for its "abuses." Later, during the hearings in the Letelier murder case, Landau admitted that the name of Walters had figured in the junta's inquiry.

Townley had to enter the U.S. with another passport (in the name of Petersen) and a visa issued in Santiago.

Why did the CIA take the risk of staging the murder of Letelier in what was almost the heart of Washington? The CIA must have been aware that such a brazen act would get special publicity. Paradoxical though it may seem, this was precisely what the organizers of the crime wanted. The liquidation of Letelier was conceived as part of a large-scale operation designed to intimidate the entire democratic Chilean community in exile and present Letelier as just another "foreign agent" who had managed to dupe liberals in the U.S.

Some U.S. newspapers learned, all of a sudden, the contents of Letelier's private papers and letters which he kept in a briefcase he always carried with him. Later, when passions were already running high over the murder, the Washington Post published libellous articles misinterpreting Letelier's correspondence, the content of which was evidently revealed to the authors by the U.S. special services. Senator Jesse Helms even claimed that Letelier had been killed by his Left-wing friends.

It was clear that provocation on such a large scale could not have been carried out by Pinochet and Contreras alone.

The cynical campaign, however, quickly petered out. Those who were behind it became nervous. They already knew that Stroessner's underling had spilled the beans about Walters' involvement. Letelier's widow made public the strange story of the duplication of her husband's papers. Eventually the dead man's supporters started an energetic private investigation the results of which were passed on to President Carter. Most newspapers in the U.S. refused to be led on by provocateurs. Columnist Robert Woodward, who became famous during the Watergate scandal, wrote in the selfsame Washington Post that the crime on Sheridan Circle was the work of an ex-CIA aide and three Cuban exiles. Woodward was right except for one thing: there were four Cubans.

What was the outcome of the trial? American justice ignored the obvious facts and classed the Letelier case as criminal rather than political. "Once the crime was solved, nobody wanted to back us up." These rueful words conclude the book "Labyrinth." Shortly before the trial Propper was taken off the case and made to resign thus ruining a career that had started with brilliant promise. He went into private business.

The trial itself was a farce. Cuban counterrevolutionaries Alvin Ross and Guillermo Novo were given ridiculously short sentences, and in May 1981, under the Reagan Administration, they were released on a merely token bail before finally being acquitted on all points. Two other gusanos—Virgilio Paz and Dionisio Suarez—were still at large, despite the fact that the foursome had been responsible for many terrorist acts.

As for Townley, the court recognized that he had been outside Washington at the moment of Letelier's assassination on September 21, 1976. He had "merely" planted a bomb in the victim's car on September 19. On the strength of this, Townley was given a ten-year prison sentence. After serving half his term he was released for good behaviour. Presumably, he has taken up his old profession.

General Vernon Walters has since changed his occupation. He is now U.S. ambassador at the United Nations. From its rostrum he often speaks in defence of human rights and condemns "international terrorism."

Over the past few years public opinion in various countries has continued to express its indignation at the amazing leniency of the American courts towards Letelier's murderers. The Spanish newspaper Pais recently quoted Senator Edward Kennedy as saying that he intended to seek the extradition of General Contreras, Colonel Espinoza and Captain Fernandez, all of whom were involved in the assassination of the Socialist minister. And we have just learned that the courts in the United States are going to reopen the inquiry into the circumstances of the crime on Sheridan Circle. So now we must have patience and wait.

Juan COBO

TAKING UP A POINT

Japanese news media gave wide coverage to the Soviet Foreign Minister's visit to this country. From him we learned about the Soviet proposals to rid the world of nuclear weaponry. However, the absence of any positive response from the Americans comes as no surprise to me. They take a different view of nuclear weapons, not realizing the horror their use would inflict on civilization. They have not had our tragic experience. They do not bear the scars of the past war, many, indeed, not even believe Hiroshima to have been a tragedy.

Ryoichi WARASHINA
Takamatsu, Japan

Our staff writer LEONID MLECHIN replies:

We are currently receiving many letters like this one. Some, incidentally, come from the U.S. Naturally, everyone expects a positive response from the U.S. leadership, but so far none has been forthcoming.

When asked if we can imagine a world without nuclear weaponry, we say that we can, indeed, that it is vital. But American politicians invested with authority and decision-making powers say it is impossible and indeed undesirable. They claim that the abolition of nuclear weaponry would destabilize the international situation and that consequently we must all learn to live with the bomb. In theory, Washington seems ready to accept a cutback in nuclear stockpiles but does not want their complete elimination. Why so? Is it because the historical experience of the U.S. is not conducive to a full awareness of the gravity of the threat?

There is a grain of truth in this. The tragedies that befell Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not affect the mentality of most Americans. One is left with the impression that over the past forty years they have never grasped the full horror of a nuclear catastrophe; they still feel no pangs of remorse or regret or any preparedness to atone. This attitude did not come into existence on its own. It has been carefully and subtly fostered. American school books, devised to mould political thinking and civic conscience, contain no word of condemnation of the atomic bombings. Even American newsmen who have been to Hiroshima place their emphasis on its rapid reconstruction and remarkable appearance today which leads the reader to the appalling conclusion that people can survive an atomic bombing.

How did Americans initially react to the news that their elected leadership had annihilated two Japanese cities and two hundred thousand people, without any military necessity whatever? A public opinion poll showed at the time that 85 per cent unreservedly approved of the crime. There were even some who felt that too few people had been killed. Though the war was virtually over, an anti-Japanese, at bottom racist, attitude was firmly imbedded in the American mentality. Washington argued that the Japanese were subhuman and that the use of any weapon to fight them was therefore morally justifiable.

President Truman linked Hiroshima with Pearl Harbor. The atom bomb was an instrument of just retribution. This moral symmetry allayed qualms, and the Americans were asked to approve of the wholesale annihilation of civilian populations as a legitimate means of warfare. In Europe, Dresden and Hamburg, and in Asia, Tokyo were carpet bombed. Next Hiroshima and Nagasaki were reduced to ashes. By atomic bombs, that is.

The Americans had no idea of the real scale of the tragedy wrought by the atom bomb. The military command and Washington politicians kept that a secret. When they did at last learn the truth it was too late as they had already come to terms with the bombing and developed an immunity. Hiroshima did not disturb them.

Meanwhile newsmen raved euphorically about the wonders of the atomic age, claiming that the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been a logical stage in the use of atomic energy. Reader's Digest impressed upon its readership that "never in all the long history of human slaughter have lives been lost to greater purpose." This was tantamount to saying that electricity could only have become a thing to be taken for granted in daily life, after a series of electrocutions of criminals.

The U.S. political establishment is loth to recognize the Hiroshima-Nagasaki tragedy as it would then have to acknowledge the barbarity of ever new generations of nuclear weaponry. What was morally right in 1945, it implies, is moral by right today and will be so tomorrow.

For decades it has been hammered into the minds of Americans that they and their national policies are infallible and that their motives are nobler and their methods cleaner than those of others. Condemnation of Hiroshima and, by the same token, of the strategy of stockpiling and using nuclear weapons fails to dovetail with this fundamentally immoral belief, rooted in national exlusiveness, in global and now neoglobal great-power chauvinism.

Preparedness to start a nuclear conflict has become a principle of U.S. postwar strategy. Now that many documents have been declassified, we know how many times Washington has considered a nuclear strike at "unruly" states and how many potential Hiroshimas the Pentagon planners have mapped out in their time. U.S. ruling circles have built up an arsenal to enable them to determine the fate of the world. In their minds the U.S. separated as it is by the oceans from Europe, Asia and Africa needs nuclear weapons as the vehicle for such a policy. It stands to reason that the perennial touting of nuclear weapons as a talisman for preserving peace could not but have affected the American mentality. Add to this the Pentagon's craving to minimize in every conceivable way the likely consequences of the use of nuclear armaments, and its striving to convince the American that he can look on safely at the sufferings of others. Hence all the talk since the Gorbachev statement of January 15 that complete deliverance from nuclear weapons is as unrealistic as it is undesirable.

Still, whether it be from articles in the press, letters, or the pronouncements of sane politicians, one has the impression that many people in the U.S. are coming to realize that it is vital to banish nuclear weapons from the life of the human race. It is to be hoped that the spread of this awareness can be accelerated. There is of course no need to impress upon the Japanese, after the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, just how vital it is to struggle against nuclear weapons. But may God forbid that all nations should similarly come to understand the horror of a nuclear holocaust at first hand. ■

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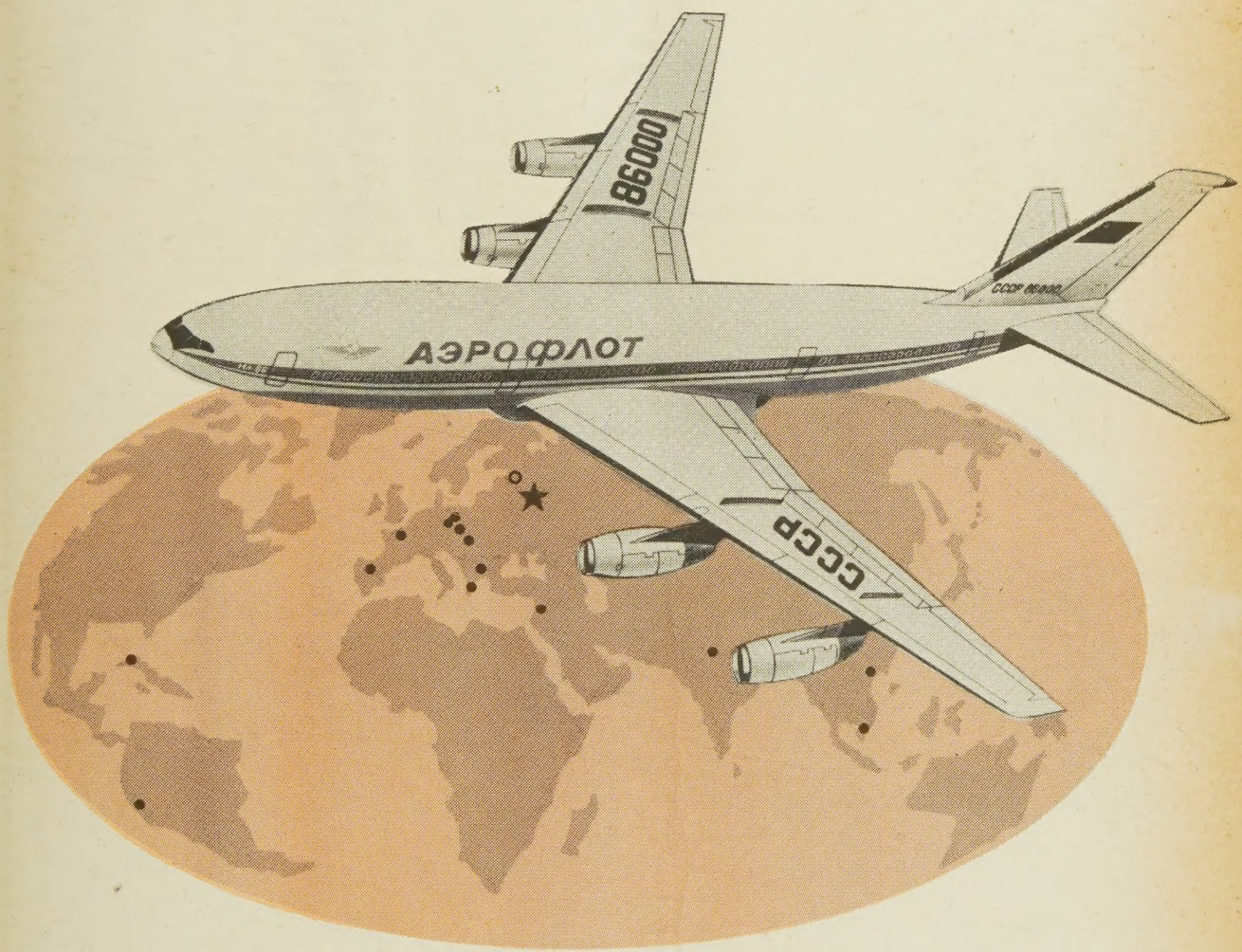

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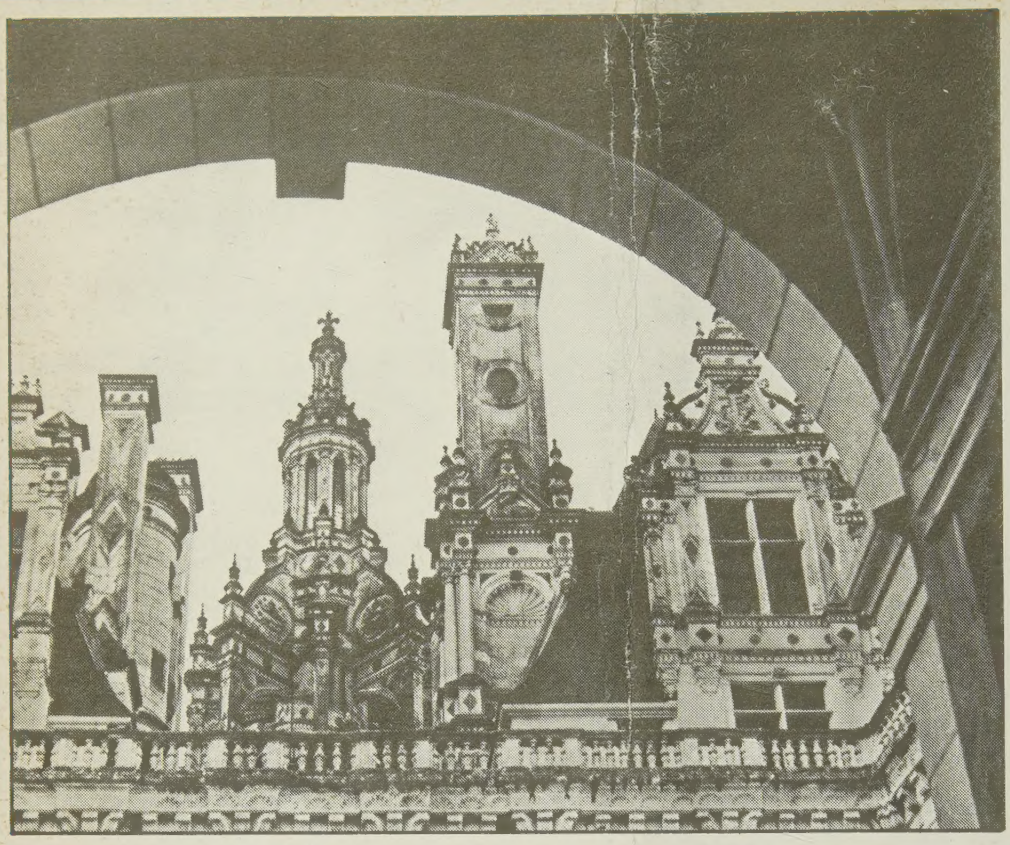


CHAMBORD

The castle stands in the valley of the Loire in the midst of a beautiful park, remote from the noise and bustle of cities and roads. In bygone days, when the problem of protecting the environment did not exist, the surrounding woods abounded in wildlife.

In 1519 King Francis I, who was an ardent hunter and also a connoisseur of the arts, conceived the idea of building an impressive castle on this spot. In due time, Chambord, an architectural masterpiece in the Renaissance style, appeared.

Archives have preserved the names of the craftsmen who built the château. But unfortunately it has not been possible to establish exactly who designed it. However, there are grounds for assuming that Leonardo da Vinci had something to do with it. Invited to France by Francis I, he lived for some years in the neighbouring Château de Cloux near Amboise, where he died the year the construction of Chambord began.

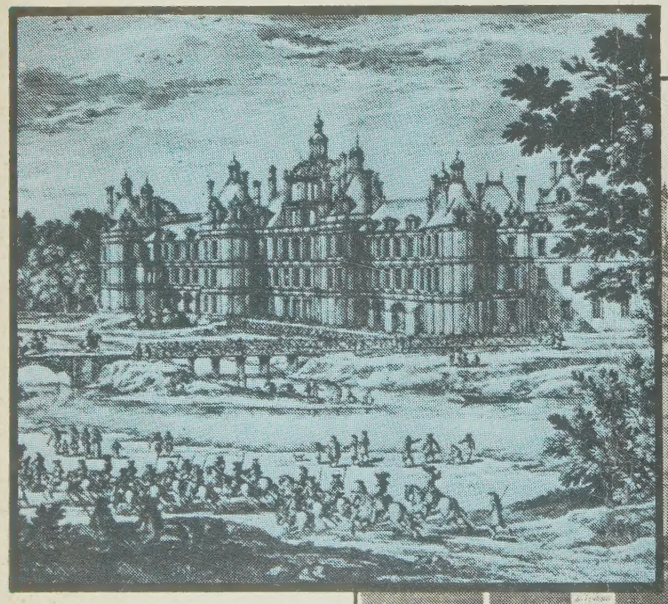
Chambord, with its 440 rooms, 65 staircases, 365 chimneys (one for every day of the year), its dazzling display of towers, spires and turrets, is the largest, most imposing and ornate of the many royal residences in the Loire valley. True, the monarchs hardly lived there except during the hunting season or on great festivals which brought as many as 2,000 guests here. The ladies watched the colourful spectacle from the gallery.

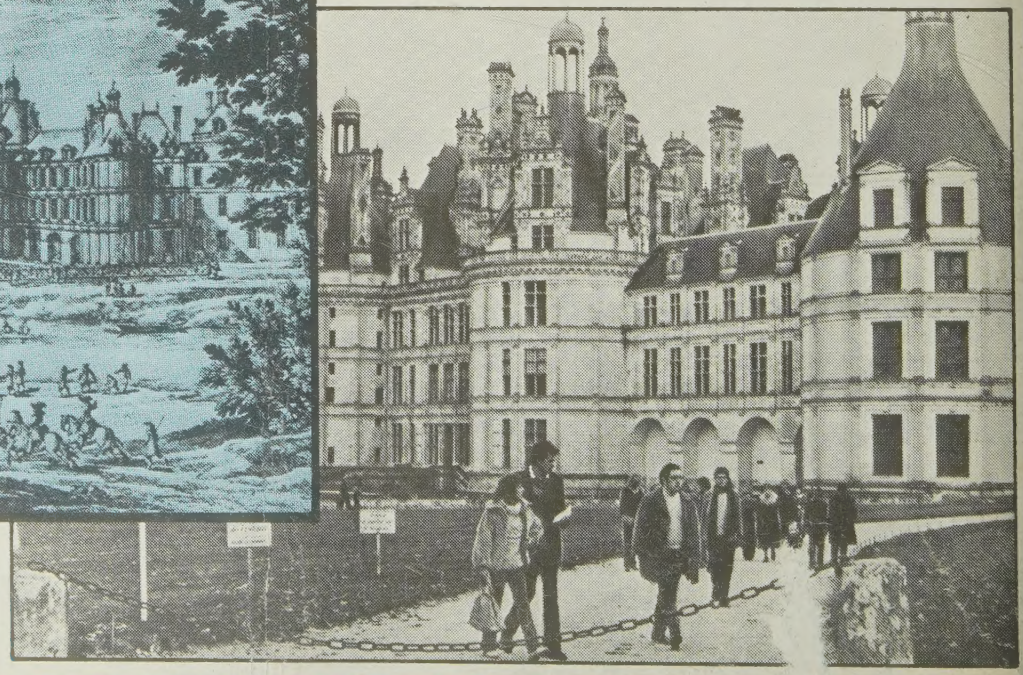
Under Louis XIV, Molière spent two months in the castle. He had been commissioned to write and produce a comedy. A performance of the play, entitled "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac," was given, but the King did not like it and he left Chambord in high dudgeon without paying the author the promised fee. The following year, 1670, Molière rehabilitated himself in the monarch's eyes by presenting him with "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," which was a success.

After the revolution of 1789, Chambord fell into decline. In 1930 it was purchased by the government for 11 million francs from a distant Bourbon descendant. During the nazi occupation of France a German general took up residence in the castle, but in 1944, when the French partisans were advancing from the south, he set fire to the building. Fortunately, the French patriots arrived in time to save it from destruction.

Albert PIN

Photos by author





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